

# Convicts & CTHULHU

Call of Cthulhu Roleplaying  
in the Penal colonies of 18<sup>th</sup> Century Australia



Gillan &  
Engelhardt  
with Jo Kreil



# Convicts & CTHULHU

For the term of his preternatural life

## THE BALLAD OF JIM JONES AT BOTANY BAY

*Come gather round and listen lads, and hear me tell m' tale,  
How across the sea from England I was condemned to sail.  
The jury found me guilty, and then says the judge, says he,  
Oh for life, Jim Jones, I'm sending you across the stormy sea.  
But take a tip before you ship to join the iron gang,  
Don't get too gay in Botany Bay, or else you'll surely hang.  
Or else you'll surely hang, he says, and after that, Jim Jones,  
Way up high upon yon gallows tree, the crows will pick your bones.*

*Our ship was high upon the seas when pirates came along,  
But the soldiers on our convict ship were full five hundred strong;  
They opened fire and so they drove that pirate ship away  
But I'd rather joined that pirate ship than gone to Botany Bay.  
With the storms a-raging round us, and the winds a-blowing gales  
I'd rather drowned in misery than gone to New South Wales.  
There's no time for mischief there, remember that, they say  
Oh they'll flog the poaching out of you down there in Botany Bay.*

*Day and night in irons clad we like poor galley slaves  
Will toil and toil our lives away to fill dishonoured graves;  
But by and by I'll slip m' chains and to the bush I'll go  
And I'll join the brave bushrangers there, Jack Donahue and Co.  
And some dark night all is right and quiet in the town,  
I'll get the bastards one and all, I'll gun the floggers down.  
I'll give them all a little treat, remember what I say  
And they'll yet regret they sent Jim Jones in chains to Botany Bay.*

(Traditional folk song c.1830, first published in 1907; recorded numerous times notably by Bob Dylan in 1992 and for the 2015 Quentin Tarantino movie "The Hateful Eight")



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# Table of Contents

Introduction .....	5	PART IV: Dark Southern Land .....	57
PART I: The Historical Setting .....	7	Cults in the Colony .....	57
Early Days of Settlement .....	8	Indigenous Horrors .....	60
Darker Days .....	8	New Nightmares .....	61
Sub-eras of Convicts & Cthulhu .....	11	PART V: Mythos Tales .....	63
Principal Settlements .....	14	Introductory Scenario: Un-Fresh Off The Boat .....	63
Communication with the 'Civilised World' .....	14	Keeper's Background .....	64
PART II: Investigations in the Colony .....	15	Involving the Investigators .....	65
Creating Investigators .....	15	The Rumour Mill .....	67
Indigenous Investigators .....	15	The Colonial Secretary .....	67
Convict Classes .....	16	On the Trail of a Blind Man .....	68
<i>Map of New South Wales</i> .....	17	The Powder Magazine .....	71
Freemen Social Classes & Outlooks .....	18	Rewards and Loose Ends .....	74
Investigator Backgrounds .....	18	Statistics .....	75
Skills .....	19	Story Seeds .....	76
Character Templates .....	21	Seed 1: The Ghosts of Vinegar Hill .....	76
Life As A Convict .....	23	Seed 2: The Lights of Botany Bay .....	78
Gear & Equipment .....	24	Seed 3: Ghosts of the North .....	82
Pay and Victuals .....	26	Seed 4: The Baleful Flood .....	84
Owning, Buying and Stealing Gear .....	27	Seed 5: The Hinterland Monster .....	86
Common Weapons .....	30	Seed 6: Dream Sequence .....	87
Investigating in the Colony .....	32	PART VI: Resources .....	91
PART III: Desperate People, Desolate Places ..	33	A Short Bibliography .....	91
A Brief Tour of Hell .....	33	TV and Film .....	91
Places in Sydney .....	35	Convict Fiction .....	91
<i>Map of Sydney Township</i> .....	37	Historical Books .....	92
Places in Parramatta .....	44	Websites .....	92
<i>Map of Parramatta Township</i> .....	46	Representative Statistics .....	93
The Coal River Settlement .....	51	Character Sheet .....	95
Other Settled Places .....	53		
Further Afield .....	54		
Van Diemen's Land .....	54		
Norfolk Island .....	55		

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## Authors' Notes

A while back Dean Engelhardt asked me if I wanted to take part in his *Australian Aeons* scenario book – adventures set in various historical periods of Australia's history – and I was aghast that no-one had stuck up their hand to do the convict era. Since I had been foolish enough to whine about it, Dean demonstrated his editorial cunning by calling my bluff and suggesting I provide some material myself. I riposted by suggesting it be a joint project and we settled on the time of the Rum Rebellion in early 1808. (The Rebellion was the second mutiny suffered by none other than William Bligh, former Captain of the *Bounty* and then Governor of the convict colony of New South Wales). The problem was the convict era background was so unique – and so rich with possibility – that we churned through a massive word count to capture everything needed to do it justice.

Dean is a master of the sandbox gaming environment and in this case we created what amounted to a veritable prosopography of early colonial New South Wales. In the end there was simply too much source material for the scenario book, but it was too cool to do away with entirely, so Dean decided to hive it off into its own beast, hence *Convicts & Cthulhu*. Since we didn't want the buyers of the scenario book to feel they were short-changed of useful historical background, we have made it a free download.

Adding the Cthulhu Mythos to the historical squalor and terror of those times became less of a stretch than it might seem – after all, madness in this period was referred to as “New South Wales Disease” because of the prevalence of the colony's denizens, convict and free citizen alike, to go insane. Even the Australian Aboriginal peoples, living a satisfied and sustainable life until European contact, were afflicted by the disease and brutality the Colonists brought with them. There is a wealth of material in this book, and even more in the references (much of it free online), so you can enjoy early convict shenanigans and mind-bending cosmic horror for many hours of gaming.

Geoff Gillan, Brisbane, 2016

Geoff is really far too modest and self-effacing for his own good. I think it's fairly safe to say that the existence of this book is almost 100% due to two things: Geoff's passion for early Australian history (and in particular the convict era) and his superlative skills as a *Call of Cthulhu* Keeper. During the development of the convict-era scenario that spawned this sourcebook, I was fortunate enough to be a part of the Skype-based playtest sessions that Geoff used to road-test the setting and the scenario. At the outset I wasn't entirely sold on the concept of playing a convicted criminal investigator, locked away in a penal colony in the middle of nowhere at the mercy of cruel and corrupt gaolers. But the playtest sessions turned out to be an amazing success – everyone found the convict world to be a compelling and intriguing backdrop for a tale of cosmic horror, so much so that a modest scenario threatened to morph into a fully-fledged convict campaign. In the end we ran something like six 4-hour playtest sessions, but even then players were sad to say goodbye to their convict investigators and the cruel world they inhabited.

When it came to editing the Rum Rebellion scenario into some kind of publishable form it was obvious to me that we had written far, far more source material for the convict-era setting than could ever be shoe-horned into the structure of a conventional *Call of Cthulhu* scenario. So, Geoff and I made the tough decision to split the manuscript in two – this book began its life as the source-book half of that initial draft. After starting down the road of making *Convicts & Cthulhu* a standalone publication I soon realised that we needed to write some scenario seeds and helpful notes about incorporating Mythos nasties into the setting. To add another voice to the writing I also roped in Jo Kreil (who has written an amazing scenario for the *Australian Aeons* book) to contribute scenario ideas as well. And then, almost at the Eleventh Hour I also came to realise that to properly introduce the convict setting the book also needed an introductory scenario of its own.

As with any game book, its ultimate success will be determined by whether you – the Keeper or player – find its contents helpful in enriching your game experience. I hope that the historical information and story ideas contained in these pages will help your group recreate the compelling game experience that first convinced me that *Convicts & Cthulhu* had enough substance to exist as a setting ... although I sincerely hope that none of your investigators ever need to suffer the sharp tongue of Governor Bligh anywhere near as frequently as our sad bunch.

Dean Engelhardt, Adelaide, 2016



# Introduction



THE CIRCUMSTANCES of English settlement of the Australian continent in 1788 are as unique as they are ghastly. Conceived as a self-contained prison, literally on the other side of the globe from the 'civilised world,' the colony of New South Wales was supposed to be somewhere that every "undesirable" element from Britain could be banished for the betterment of the homeland. What nobody considered was the potential for catastrophe created by the concentration of all the "dregs" of British society in a pressure-cooker environment supervised by gaolers who were not much better than the rabble over whom they kept watch. Many from both groups brought with them dark beliefs and worship of things best forgotten. Left unchecked far away from watchful eyes, some of those degenerations festered in ways they never could before. And while those from over the seas introduced their ancient gods to the continent of Australia, there were other forces that had slept in the land for long, long aeons.

This is the setting of *Convicts & Cthulhu*, a claustrophobic and remote microcosm in which horrors – both old and new – prey upon men and women unfortunate enough to find themselves sentenced to the penal colonies of New South Wales and its dependencies. Terrors exist here just below the surface of a way of life already filled with mundane horrors of human cruelty and injustice. Lurking within this darkness are ample launching points which an imaginative Keeper might use to weave any number of tales of darkness, whether they be horrors wrought by forces of the Cthulhu Mythos or merely the debauched iniquities wrought by the hands of evil men.

This sourcebook presents the colony of New South Wales (and its dependencies) in the rough time period from the mid-1790s until 1810. At this time, the penal settlement of Sydney has already become somewhat established, and a few farming settlements have sprung up. But there is no concept yet that this place will ever become more than a gaol for the unworthy. Furthermore, during this time the corrupt administration of the colony at the hands of the New South Wales Corps is slowly spiralling towards violence and conflict – discord that will eventually erupt in the infamous "Rum Rebellion" of 1808. The dark days of this decade of growing depravity and unrest – and the years that follow as the colonies scramble to restore some kind of order – make for particularly powerful thematic settings for dark tales of horror.

**Note:** Readers of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage are warned that this book contains references and images of deceased persons.



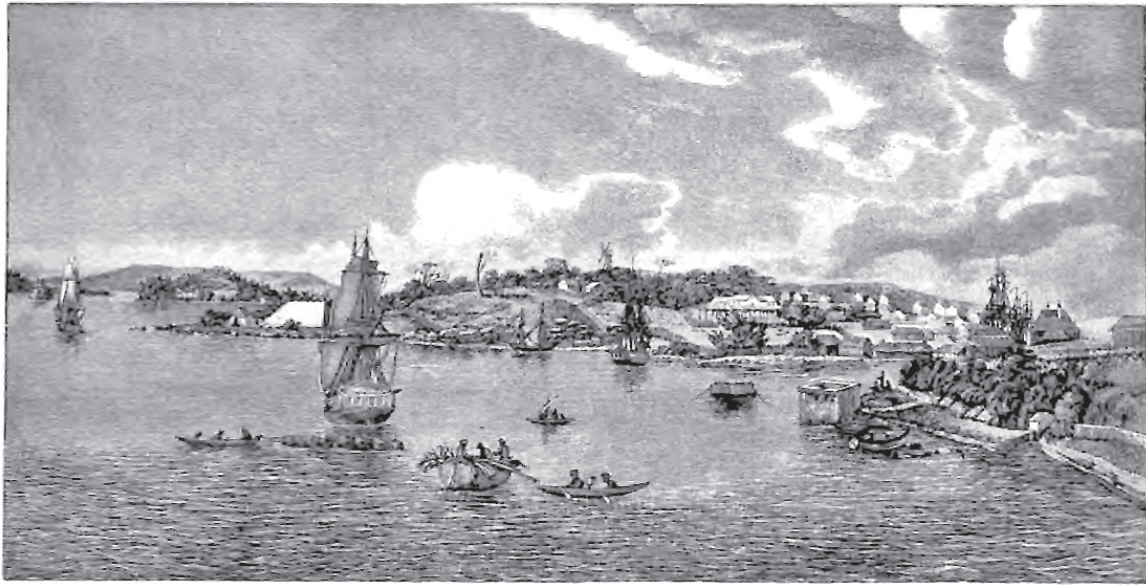
# CONVICTS & CTHULHU



A map showing the limits of geographical knowledge about the continent variously named Terra Australis, New Holland, and Australia. Most of this data comes from the exploratory voyages of Capt. Matthew Flinders, R.N., who circumnavigated the continent in 1803. Also shown are the handful of settlement sites, with their date of establishment.



Sydney Cove, 1803



# PART I: The Historical Setting



**A**LTHOUGH ABORIGINAL peoples have lived on the continent we now call Australia for over 60,000 years, its “discovery” by Europeans came relatively late in the great era of colonial expansion. Numerous Dutch and English sailors had encountered its northern and western coastlines in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries (often by accident) but their reports of a desolate and infertile land did not inspire anybody to claim it as territory. All that changed in 1770 with the exploratory voyage of English captain James Cook in the *Endeavour*. Cook had been given the secretive mission to locate and claim any worthwhile territories in the Pacific before the French – England’s arch-enemies of the day – could snatch them. With the discovery of the lushly fertile eastern coastline of “New Holland” (as the continent was named on early maps), Cook’s mission found its greatest success.

While news of Cook’s discovery was welcomed back in England, much debate arose about how to best settle and exploit this newly-found territory at the very furthest corner of the globe. Clearly, any claim to land in such a far-flung place would need to be supported by a permanent settlement of some kind (otherwise another colonial nation was sure to invade it). But who would want to live in such an isolated location? The debate was further complicated by urgent social problems that were blighting England at the time, in particular the massive overcrowding and poverty in London and other industrial cities. Prior to achieving independence in the 1770s, the American colonies served as a popular place for British criminals to be transported as punishment for petty crimes. This was a convenient system that eased pressures on a massively overcrowded British prison system as well as reducing the population in the cities. In the eyes of many, the



newly-discovered territory in the Pacific seemed like an excellent place to continue the practice of transportation of convicts. Thus was the notion of a purpose-built penal colony conceived.

The First Fleet – a convoy of eleven ships carrying convicts, gaolers, volunteer settlers and government officials to found the new colony – left England in 1787 and arrived early in the next year. When they planted the British flag on January 26<sup>th</sup>, 1788, the new colony – dubbed New South Wales – was brought into existence.

## Early Days of Settlement

Administratively, the colony of New South Wales was run by the Colonial Office within the British Government. For practical reasons it was important to have a senior military official overseeing the colony as a local Governor. The first Governor was Arthur Phillip, a naval man who was also captain of the First Fleet, and this tradition of naval appointments continued largely through the early history of the colony.

The colony gave Great Britain a strategic toe-hold in the Pacific during a time of conflict with France, as well as potential revenue from sealing and other South Seas trades, and a possible source of flax and timber for its ships. At the same time as settlements were made at Sydney (on the shores of the huge Port Jackson Bay) and Parramatta (at the bay's furthest western extent), a ship was sent to establish a small satellite settlement on Norfolk Island. This location – some 1,600km (1,000 miles) away to the northeast – was another place noted by Cook as ripe for colonisation. In the context of the prison colony, this smaller settlement was imagined as a deliberately harsher and even more remote place which could be used to send those who misbehaved while in the principal convict settlement of New South Wales. In later decades, additional smaller sites were established with a similar goal (Coal River, modern-day Newcastle, and Van Diemen's land were both founded in 1803).

The role of guards of the convicts as well as a rudimentary police force fell to the British army, rather than the navy, in the shape of the **New South Wales**

## Convict Labour

Convicts could be transported to Australia for all kinds of crimes, from forgery and embezzlement to theft or crimes of violence. Their sentences were usually transportation for 7 years, 14 years, or life, although any convict could be freed after serving time in New South Wales.

Convicts were used as forced labour in the colony. Their assignments were as follows:

- **Government service.** This was usually on government farms, road gangs, or public buildings. The Government always had first choice of convicts.
- **Assignment to Military officers** for the needs of the military, but also for their private farms.
- **Assignment to Civil officers.** Some literate convicts could support the work of officers, while others might work on private farms.
- **Assignment to Free Settlers.** Typically farming or building private residences and out-buildings.

**Corps.** The Corps was created for the purpose of policing the colony, and numbered 685 members. The NSW Corps has a notorious reputation in Australian history, many military officers at the time considering its members the dregs of Europe. Some soldiers were themselves military criminals (in particular deserters) given pardon if they were willing to serve as gaolers in New South Wales. Even the British Secretary of War at the time commented that penal duty was “unlikely to attract the best candidates.”

## Darker Days

Although this book can be used to play scenarios set in the very first days of colonial New South Wales, *Convicts & Cthulhu* is primarily designed to give Keepers and players resources for gaming in the decade or two **after** European settlement became entrenched (roughly the era 1795 to 1810). The reasons for this are simple – while the challenges of establishing a new colony from scratch



## Impact on Indigenous Australians

Despite the general good intentions of the early colonial governments of New South Wales, the arrival of Europeans has had a disastrous impact on the Australian Aboriginal population. Prior to 1788 the regions now settled by convicts and colonists supported a large Aboriginal population, divided into 29 clans. In less than two decades, most of those groups have been decimated. The biggest culprit is disease, in particular Smallpox brought on ships from England.

The surviving Aboriginal peoples and European settlers have an uneasy relationship. In general most Aboriginal people simply want to be left alone to continue their traditional lifestyle, but circumstances frequently prevent that from being viable. A handful of Indigenous people have taken more drastic action, fuelled by a combination of resentment and hunger. This has led to instances of theft and in a few cases all-out-attack on homesteads. Such events are always the source of violent retaliatory strikes by soldiers and settlers, some of whom seek out any opportunity to shoot a few "natives." Indiscriminate attacks on Aboriginal populations are, however, considered to be crimes and several gun-happy settlers have been brought before magistrates in Sydney and charged as a result of such murder sprees.

were enormous, those efforts were overseen by a colonial Government that was generally fair (and even moderately benevolent). Although life was hard, the darkness that lurked within the hearts of convicts and their equally-corrupt gaolers was largely buried, kept silent by long hours of back-breaking labour.

All that changed in 1795. Owing to a sudden illness, the humane Governor Arthur Philips found himself forced to return to England at short notice. The haste of his departure meant that the Colonial Office in Britain had sent no replacement; as a stop-gap measure, it was agreed that power to govern the colony would fall temporarily to an officer of the NSW Corps, Francis Grose. This single decision was to prove the start of a long decline into corruption and cruelty, and ultimately into lawlessness.

## THE RUM ECONOMY

By far the biggest problems caused by the military oversight of New South Wales in the days after Phillips' departure stemmed from the establishment of the NSW Corps as a monopoly trader – in particular in the trading of rum as currency. Grose was much less high-minded than Philips and under his rule a system was established which allowed convicts to be paid for their labour in allotments of rum, thereby making rum an equivalent for hard currency in the colony. In part, this system was introduced to alleviate the critical shortage





## Timeline of Early Colonial New South Wales

The early days after the arrival of Europeans at Sydney are typically reckoned according to the Governor who was presiding over the colony at the time, since the personalities and decisions of those individuals largely dictated the colony's policies and the events they inspired.

**Governor Arthur Phillip 1788-1792** – Phillip is a naval officer, a humane man and a product of the Enlightenment. He tries to treat convicts and Aboriginal people fairly. His period of office marks the commencement of the colony, the establishment of the convict system and the rudiments of building Sydney Town around Sydney Harbour and the Tank Stream.

- 1788 Arrival of First Fleet of around 1500 convicts and their gaolers, under Governor Philip. Foundation of Sydney.
- 1789 Establishment of New South Wales Corps; Settlement of Norfolk Island, a place of secondary punishment.
- 1790 Famine strikes the colony. Pemulwuy and his son Tedbury, of the indigenous Eora people, commence a guerrilla war against the white settlers.
- 1792 The Second Fleet arrives with supplies to relieve the famine.
- 1792 Phillip returns to England. He is accompanied by Bennelong, who is the first Aboriginal person to travel to Europe.

**Administration of Grose and Paterson 1792-1795** – Francis Grose was Lieutenant Governor and a major in the NSW Corps. He had been a trusted aide to Philip who left him charge when the Governor returned ill in 1792. Grose's two year tenure was notable for the advantages he gave his fellow officers, granting them land, giving them control over the convicts and the judiciary and increasing their pay. Most critically he allowed officers to trade, especially in Rum. He also appointed Lt. John Macarthur as Inspector of Public Works. His encouragement of officer and settler farms ended the threat of famine in the colony. Paterson was second in command of the NSW Corps under Grose and was administrator of the colony between Grose's departure and Governor John Hunter's arrival, a period of nine months. Grose and Paterson's period sees the officers and soldiers of the NSW Corps with unfettered command and making huge profits. Most convict wages in this period are paid in rum.

**Governor John Hunter 1795-1800** – Hunter is a naval officer, a man of 60 and keen to do his duty, but his attempts to curb the profits of the military were doomed by inconsistent support from his masters in London, an incompetent colonial bureaucracy and opposition from John Macarthur and the NSW Corps. He was sympathetic and humane towards the convicts, for a man of his time and career.

- 1797 John Macarthur buys merino sheep, effectively marking the commencement of the Australian wool trade. Discovery of coal. Pemulwuy attacks Parramatta, is wounded and captured, but escapes.
- 1798 White population of settlement around 5,000.

**Governor Philip Gidley King 1800-1806** – King was a naval officer who had served under Philip and been previously stationed at Norfolk Island. His return to the colony saw him keen to enact reforms to curb the Rum trade. However like Hunter he meets with much resistance and little success. He was more successful in encouraging the growth of the Government's flocks and herds. Industries, such as sealing and coal mining, also commenced during his time. The main change during King's time is that fewer people have to draw from Government Stores (32% down from 72%) and there is a 5% duty on alcohol imports. Also the gaol and brewery at Parramatta are constructed and the foundations of the ticket of leave system are set down.

- 1802 Pemulwuy is killed. Tedbury, the rebel leader's son, becomes an ally of John Macarthur.
- 1803 Mathew Flinders circumnavigates Australia. Sydney Gazette founded. Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) established.
- 1804 Foundation of Hobart Town in Van Diemen's Land (now Tasmania). Irish Rebellion at Castle Hill. Establishment of settlement at Newcastle.

**Bligh Years 1806-1808.** See "Life Under Bligh".

- 1806 Bligh becomes Governor of NSW.
- 1808 Rum Rebellion. Bligh is overthrown and military junta takes command.

**Military Interregnum 1808-1810.** See "The Time of Military Rule". Concludes with Lachlan Macquarie arriving to become Governor of New South Wales. End of the New South Wales Corps.



of coinage in the colony – there was simply not enough money in circulation, hence some form of barter was an inevitable necessity. Rum was the most convenient medium of such exchange. But the introduction of the system was also significantly motivated by the fact that during Grose's time, the control and monopoly of rum was the province of the NSW Corps. This meant that the guards could effectively set the "price" (or currency equivalent) of incoming rum to whatever they wished. The profits to the senior army officers were enormous, with some historians suggesting 1000% mark up.

This practice made some within the NSW Corps immensely rich and fuelled other forms of corruption such as generous land grants to military officers and the permission to use convicts as free labour on their land. All of these privileges the NSW Corps officers came to see as their right, and none more so than John Macarthur – a man who was the army paymaster at the time this system was created (and who after resigning his military career went on to become one of the colony's most wealthy private landholders).

When official governors arrived to take control of the colony, the rum economy was initially allowed to continue. The British Colonial Office, however, took a dim view of it not least for the moral degeneration it feared such a system would create. At first it charged the incoming Governor of New South Wales to curb or suppress the trade, but when that met with resistance they chose a new Governor for the colony who they believed would take a more forceful stand. That man was William Bligh (whose earlier naval career had been controversial because of the infamous mutiny under his command of *The Bounty*). Bligh decided with characteristic lack of subtlety to take on the Corps head-on, outlawing the trafficking of rum entirely. This led to a vitriolic confrontation with Macarthur and others of the NSW Corp. At first this drama played out in the courtroom. But the army men wanted more decisive action to restore their lucrative income ... leading ultimately to the uprising known today as the Rum Rebellion.

## THE RUM REBELLION

On January 26, 1808 the military staged an uprising (effectively a *coup d'état*). Governor Bligh was arrested and a military government was instated – officially governed by Lt. Col. George Johnston, but in practice controlled by the wealthy Macarthur.

This lawless government lasted 2 years before the British Colonial Office brought the upstart colony back into line in 1810 by disbanding the NSW Corps as a unit and sending a powerful army man as replacement governor – Major-General Lachlan Macquarie. Although legal trials and recriminations lasted for years, the appointment of Macquarie effectively brought this dark chapter of Australian history to a close forever, and set the colony of New South Wales on a path towards developing into a proper society.

## Sub-eras of *Convicts & Cthulhu*

The time period covered by *Convicts & Cthulhu* (mid-1790s to 1810) sees considerable change in the colony of New South Wales. For this reason, it is useful to consider three different phases – life under the rum trade, life under Governor Bligh, and life after the Rum Rebellion.

## LIFE DURING THE RUM TRADE

Keepers may wish to run a *Convicts & Cthulhu* scenario or campaign set during the time of the Rum Trade (which was rampant from 1792 until its official banning by edicts in early 1807). Such a backdrop provides a powerful thematic way to highlight the corruption that can arise when those who are in power are geographically far away from those to whom they are accountable.

Stories set during this era may also highlight the shocking and arbitrary cruelty of the convict system (see "Life as a Convict" on page 23) as well as the barbarism and sense of entitlement displayed by members of the NSW Corps. While this cruel subjugation of the large convict population for the most part generates only antipathy and hatred in return, occasionally things erupt into more violent confrontations. One notable incident during this era is the Castle Hill rebellion of 1804 when Irish convicts in an outlying part of the colony overpowered guards, armed themselves, and marched towards Parramatta burning farmsteads as they went. This uprising was notable in that it was shocked the colony's administration enough that martial law was (briefly) declared before the hopelessly outnumbered convict rebels were violently



gunned down in a skirmish that came to be called the “Battle of Vinegar Hill.”

One thing that is certain to play an important role in any tales set during this period is the liquid currency, rum. Scenarios set in this time might allow for investigators crossing paths with John Macarthur – perhaps as a wealthy patron, or perhaps as a nefarious nemesis. See the box nearby for a biographical sketch of Macarthur’s life.

## LIFE UNDER BLIGH

The reign of Governor William Bligh only lasted about 17 months (he landed in Sydney in August, 1806 and was violently deposed on January 26, 1808) but it is a fertile and eventful period for the Keeper to exploit. The force with which Bligh tackles the wealthy merchants and officers of the NSW Corps – coupled with his abrasive and repellent character – engenders a society that is highly polarised. Everyone is either a supporter of the Governor or a supporter of the rich elite, and both sides watch each other with a weather eye. Subversive plots and back-room meetings abound, reminiscent of France in the days before the Revolution. Nobody knows for certain where events are heading – the air is electric; there is a sense that eventually something must break.

Stories set in Bligh’s reign might feature thematic elements of subterfuge and deception; things (or people) may not necessarily be what they seem. Character motivations are always potentially clouded, either by deceit or by their own self-interest. High military and government offices have mostly been corrupted by the wealth and influence of the NSW Corps, or simply alienated by Bligh’s obnoxious verbal antics. Another element that could play a role in stories is the fractious relationship between members of the Army and the Navy – ever since the founding of the colony the ruling elite (the governor and some of the judiciary) are Navy appointment while those who do the “grunt work” are all Army men. Predictably this serves as yet another source of contention.

Investigations set during this era may incorporate direct encounters with the acid-tongued Governor Bligh (although any investigators summoned into his presence for a dressing-down are to be pitied).

## John Macarthur

**‘art, cunning, impudence, and a pair of basilisk eyes’**

John Macarthur was the son of a small tradesman in England who joined the NSW Corps at age 22. He arrived in Sydney in 1790. A charismatic and driven man, he used the interregnum between Governors when NSW Corps officer Francis Grose was in charge of the colony to become very wealthy. In some ways Macarthur was a visionary, and was at the forefront of creating the wool industry of NSW, which was to become one of the colony’s staples throughout the 19th century. However was also an irascible, implacable man who brooked no opposition to his profitmaking. Governor King sent Macarthur back to England in 1801 to be court-martialed for duelling his superior officer. Both parties were criticized, and eventually the charges dropped. Macarthur returned to the colony and resigned from the army in 1804 to take up being a merchant and grazier full-time.



The box nearby provides a brief biographical sketch of the man as well as some notes on portraying him.

## THE TIME OF MILITARY RULE

The months following the Rum Rebellion until the arrival of Lachlan Macquarie provide a unique and semi-lawless backdrop which might make for an interesting and flavour-filled story. As with all rebellions, the social standing of any individual in the military-run society is governed by which side they supported during the uprising (or alternatively whether they can make a convincing enough case that they supported the winning side). This provides a wide variety of different character roles, some representing those who once held power but wield it no longer, others being individuals who have had a sudden elevation of status. Distrust and lies abound as people jostle to fill the power vacuums left when the established order unravels.



## William Bligh

**'tyrannical and oppressive and unofficerlike'**



William Bligh was born in 1754.

Before he came to govern New South Wales he was most famous as the Captain of the *HMS Bounty*, a ship that suffered mutiny occasioned by the crew's disdain for Bligh's tyrannical and paranoid captaincy. After the mutiny Bligh and a group of loyal supporters were forced into a small boat, making an historic voyage over 3,000 miles to Timor. Bligh was exonerated by the navy for the loss of his ship, and by 1806 had gained powerful patronage in London, and was selected to succeed Governor King in New South Wales. His special instructions were to curb the traffic in spirits in the colony. Bligh was noted for having a raging temper, a short fuse, an encyclopaedic knowledge of foul language and an unwillingness to modify his orders. He was described as having 'an unfortunate capacity for breeding rebellion'. His nickname in the colony is 'the Bounty Bastard'.

## Being Bligh

Playing a larger than life historical figure like the notorious Captain Bligh can be daunting for a Keeper. Some details that might help your portrayal:

- Bligh speaks in a West Country accent. This is the sort of accent famously vulgarized by Robert Newton as Long John Silver. The peerless Anthony Hopkins uses the accent in his version of Bligh in the 1984 movie *The Bounty*.
- Hopkins' performance is useful for demonstrating Bligh's turning on a hair from reasonable to shouting, especially if he thinks he is being disrespected. Don't be afraid to do this.
- Bligh is a straightforward Navy man and takes any stuttering, hesitation, evasion and other verbal manoeuvres on the part of investigators poorly. It will incur his wrath at once, and require a powerful **Fast Talk** to get out of.
- Keepers should not be afraid to have Bligh yell and curse over investigators. He was known to shake his fist in the faces of those he angered. If foul language doesn't offend, lay it on thick, since Bligh always did.

As a general guide for Keepers, the following circumstances are all possibilities:

- **Those who actively supported Bligh before the rebellion:** Generally such characters will find themselves imprisoned. The Rebel administration will trump up some charge against them and either confine them in Government House or their own homes if they are powerful, gaol them for an indeterminate time if they are not, or send them to Coal River if they are already convicts.
- **Those who were generally predisposed towards Bligh's policies before the rebellion:** The rebels work to track down pro-Bligh individuals within the colony, requiring them to sign a petition to denounce the former Governor. If they have done so, their former affiliations will be largely overlooked; if they have refused they may be on the road to being locked up along with Bligh's supporters.

- **Those who were generally supportive of the rebellion but not involved in staging it:** Such individuals will be embraced by the new military regime and any "unfortunate" activities that may have occurred during the tumultuous rebellion will be quietly overlooked.
- **Those who were involved in staging the rebellion:** Generally such characters are the new elite, rewarded with land and a plum government position with little real work expected.

It is worth noting that while the military government remains in place, these reversals of fortune seem as though they will last forever. In reality, for most people they will not. All of these conditions (save the land allotments which may stay) will be reviewed once Lachlan Macquarie arrives and with very few exceptions overturned. Rebel enemies locked up will be freed and Rebel allies in cushy jobs will be dismissed and their land returned to the Crown.



Stories set during the time of military rule are likely to be seasoned by the uncertainty and unfamiliarity of the new social structures. While convicts are still at the bottom of the pile, the position of everyone else has been shaken up, sometimes in unexpected ways. As always there are winners and losers, opportunists and hard-luck cases.

## Principal Settlements

Despite having been settled for a decade or more, the colony of New South Wales is still relatively modest in terms of its construction and the locations that have been settled.

Sydney Town is the main settlement of the colony, with further settlements established in Parramatta to the west of Sydney and Hawkesbury River to the north. Sydney provides a harbour, seat of government and merchant warehouses; Parramatta is mostly grazing land; the rich soil of the Hawkesbury River basin provides crops.

As the colony grows a handful of additional settlements are created. Coal River (or Newcastle as the settlement later came to be known) on the coast to the north of Sydney is one of the first of these, providing fishing and a source of convict-mined coal.

The section “A Brief Tour Of Hell” (starting on page 33) provides a detailed map of Sydney Town. Gazetteers for Sydney and Parramatta are also provided in that section as are some notes about the pitiful conditions of life at Coal River.

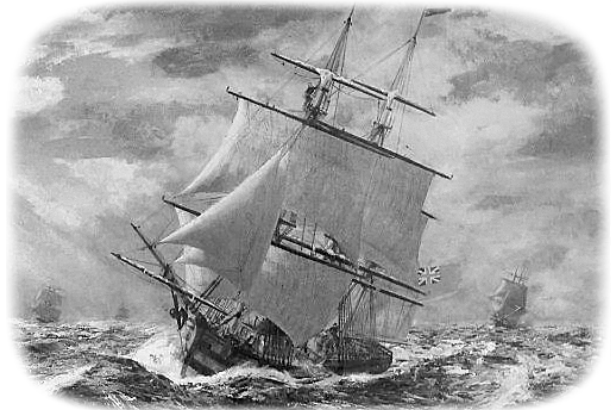
While New South Wales is by far the largest British convict colony in Australia in this era, it is not the only one. There are smaller satellite settlements on the island of Van Diemen’s Land (modern-day Tasmania) and on Norfolk Island. Brief details about these places are provided in the section “Further Afield” on page 54.

## Communication with the ‘Civilised World’

Put simply, although the scattered settlements on the Australian continent are in frequent contact with one another, communications back to Britain is extremely slow and unreliable. Ships sailing between Europe and New South Wales can take

up to eight months to complete the journey, and these represent the only ways by which news and personal correspondence can be sent. Even major pieces of news take months to travel the globe (for example, news of the Rum Rebellion which occurred in January 1808 did not become known in England until September of the same year). Ships also occasionally sink, carrying any messages or packages they carry to the bottom of the sea.

Prior to 1809 there is no organised postal service between the colonies and England. Individuals could make private arrangements with the captains of visiting ships, paying for him to convey their letter or parcel aboard his next sailing. When the ship had arrived at the desired destination the captain would surrender the correspondence to whoever approached him and claimed to be the recipient. This scheme was obviously open to impersonation. To circumvent this problem a more organised Government system was instituted in 1809, which also set a standardised price for letters and parcels. For a shilling an individual in New South Wales could send a letter to England (although soldiers’ letters were much cheaper, costing only a penny). Parcels cost 2s/6d if they were under 20 pounds, 5s if they weighed more. When a letter or parcel arrived at its destination it would be placed in a Government store and the fact of its arrival published in the newspaper (in the *Sydney Gazette* for those arriving in the colony). To claim the item an individual would need to apply to the Post Master and satisfy him of their identity. In Sydney, the Post Master role was initially performed by Mr Isaac Nichols, an assistant to the colony’s Naval Officer. Nichols operated the service from his private home.







# PART II: Investigations in the Colony



## Creating Investigators

Investigators in *Convicts & Cthulhu* will come from one of three groups:

- **Indigenous Australians:** trying to survive until the white-skinned strangers decide to leave their lands;
- **Convicts:** sentenced to transportation half-way around the world; and
- **Free Settlers, Guards and Government Officials:** here by their own volition, perhaps seeking a better life, perhaps escaping a worse one in England.

Each of these groups has its own social hierarchies and profession options (as well as different character templates, see page 21).

## Indigenous Investigators

The indigenous peoples of the settled areas of the NSW Colony have had their way of life changed completely. These were the Eora people of the coast, especially the Cadigal and Wandal bands in the city area. Some were pushed to the margins of areas such as the Hawkesbury River; others became urbanized, remaining in the regions of Sydney but continuing their livelihoods of fishing and hunting as best they could. Many were killed by the small-pox epidemic of 1791, as well as by other European



diseases. After some early resistance there was relative peace between the Aboriginal peoples and the white colonists, although violence and tension did erupt on both sides throughout the colonial era, as contested ground was fought over.

In general, while there is no systematized violence by white settlers against Aboriginal people, the general perception of the Europeans is that the indigenous peoples of Australia are at best “noble savages.” Their lives, skills and knowledge were not rated particularly – which is a testament more to an ingrained sense of racial superiority than individual malice. Throughout the time period covered by this setting, white settlers began to appreciate some aspects of the bushcraft of Aboriginal people, in particular their abilities to track animals and people. This skill alone might justify the inclusion of one or more Aboriginal investigators in a group otherwise made up of Europeans.

For more information on the clan groupings of NSW and their languages, see Investigator Backgrounds on page 18.

## Convict Classes

While convicts in the penal colony of NSW are generally considered to be the lowest-of-the-lows in the natural hierarchy of inhabitants there are several groups whose status rises marginally above that dismal station.

**Fully Pardoned:** Perhaps the least shunned of the “convict classes” are the rare few who have, for one reason or another, been granted a full unconditional pardon. Generally this only happened if some evidence had come to light which cleared the convicted man or woman of the original offence(s) for which they had been transported to the colonies. Players who want their investigator to be a fully pardoned convict will need to create a suitable back-story and justification for this rare reversal of sentencing. A convict that receives an unconditional pardon is theoretically now a free man or woman and has all the rights and privileges bestowed upon normal citizens (including the ability to leave the NSW colony should they so desire). Of course, in practice the stigma of the original conviction is likely to still linger in the minds of former gaolers and free citizens alike, some of whom may consider the investigator

“shifty.” Other more broad-minded settlers will, however, openly treat a pardoned convict with the same respect as anyone else.

**Conditionally Pardoned:** A less generous reprise from a conviction was the conditional pardon, which overturned the original guilty finding but notably did not provide the freedom to leave the colony. Apart from this one (fairly significant) limitation, conditionally pardoned convicts were otherwise afforded all the rights and privileges of a free person. Of course as noted above, some members of the community are still likely to treat such investigators as criminals who have somehow slithered free of their justly-earned sentence. The Governor and other high officials has the power to grant conditional pardons to those convicts who have provided some form of notable service to the colony.

**Ticket-of-Leave:** A still weaker relaxation of the otherwise highly restrictive convict system exists in the form of a “ticket of leave.” While most convicts had little or no say in where they were assigned to work, and no ability to demand payment in return for labours undertaken for private citizens, those who had earned a ticket-of-leave held both those privileges. Such a convict is allowed by the colony to effectively work for him or herself with no obligations to undertake Government service. The down-side of this arrangement is that a ticket-of-leave convict is also not entitled to any support from the Government, including the provision of rations (which normal convicts receive as their only reward for labouring). Instead the convict is expected to earn enough pay from selling his or her services to be able to purchase whatever is needed to survive. Technically a ticket-of-leave convict is still a convict and is theoretically still under surveillance by the NSW Corps. The ticket-of-leave can be cancelled at any time as a punishment for misconduct. Convicts are usually granted a ticket-of-leave as a reward for some kind of personal service to a high ranking official: frequently this involves informing on another convict (“nosing someone out”). For this reason, convicts look upon their brethren who have been granted a ticket-of-leave with suspicion. After all, what have they done for the Governor to earn those privileges?

**Serving Convict:** In the absence of any form of ticket-of-leave or pardon, most convicts are simply serving out their original sentence, day-by-day. For some there is a prospect of a future return to Eng-



To  
Coal River  
40 miles



The dotted lines shew the ground Walked over lately  
 • Are places where the Latitude has been Observed  
 Those places marked thus  $\boxtimes$  are the principal part of  
 our Cultivation



land, but for most the best they can hope for is to become free members of the colony when they have served their time.

## Freemen Social Classes & Outlooks

When the colony of New South Wales was first established, its role was clear in the minds of all the free (non-convict) men and women: it existed as an isolated prison. But as time went on and a rudimentary society began to spring up – including a number of free settlers who came to make a new life working this unfamiliar land – things became less clear. By the time period covered by this sourcebook there was an active and growing tension about what future role the colony should serve. Was it simply a gaol, with gaolers and the rudiments of civilization for support, as the Governors and the Colonial Office saw it? Or was it a true colony, with opportunity for expansion and development, as the merchants and settlers of the colony would have it? And if it was to be the latter, then what role would the convicts have? Could they take their place among the free settlers after they had become emancipated? Or would this create a degenerate society and lessen the impact of transportation to New South Wales as a deterrent to crime? These issues helped give rise to some of the main factions in the colony among the Europeans.

Key groups amongst the freemen included:

**Government Officials** – the high officials of the Colony, including the Governor, the Naval Officer, the Judge Advocate, and the Commissary (for a full list, see the box nearby). Under them were such positions as the Chief Constables of Sydney and Parramatta. Their major interest was to oversee to an orderly colony and maintain an effective prison.

**The Military** – the NSW Corps, its officers and men. Military Officers also served as Judges in the military tribunal, since the major law of the colony was military rather than civil. Thanks to the largesse shown the officers when their own leaders were in charge between Governors Philip and King (see *The Rum Economy*, page 9), they have had an opportunity to use their position to make themselves very rich and powerful. They object to anything that would interfere with this.

**The “Exclusives”** – A sizeable proportion of the colony’s free settlers see themselves as a significantly better class or person than the convicts and believe the convicts should “know their place.” Ironically many of them have not come from high birth in England, but from the lower middle or middle classes. John Macarthur is the prime example of this kind, although he was also an ex-NSW Corps quartermaster, so was allied with them closely.

**The “Emancipists”** – Others amongst the free settler population believe that once a convict has served his or her time there should be no barrier to their living a free life in the colony with all the opportunities of the free settler.

**Farmer Settlers** – Some free settlers have no interest in the question of convict rights and simply want to be free to farm the land in their agricultural holdings (mostly in the Hawkesbury River region at the time of this setting).

Members of the last three of these groups (and in particular the Farmers) tend towards the belief that the longer-term future of the NSW colony lays in the establishment of reliable agriculture industries. The Government and military are less interested in that outcome, except to the extent that it allows everyone (including the sizeable convict population) to be fed – something that was not easily achieved in the early years of the colony. Investigators who are not Government administrators or military officers will certainly have an opinion on this important question – players should nominate whether the individual is an “Exclusive”, “Emancipist” or a “Farmer.”

## Investigator Backgrounds

Indigenous investigators will likely come from one of the 29 clan groupings which make up the loose affiliation of the Eora Nation. The names of these clan groups (usually referred to as “tribes” by the Europeans) and the approximate location of their land is shown on the map nearby. In general, Aboriginal investigators in the New South Wales region will speak one or more of the following languages: Dharug, Guringal, and Dharawal. Of these, Dharug is the most widespread, Guringal is spoken mostly by clans in the Manly region and country to the north, and Dharawal is spoken by groups south of Botany Bay.



# Government Officials

Running of the colonial government was performed by military or civilian bureaucrats occupying the following roles:

- **Governor:** The ultimate authority in the colony; to date the position has been filled by an officer of the Royal Navy. The Governor is the Commander-in-Chief as well as the Chief Magistrate.
- **Judge-Advocate:** Responsible for administration of justice and running court cases (which are heard by the colony's Bench of Magistrates).
- **Provost-Marshal:** The most senior individual responsible for "law enforcement"; loosely similar to the English notion of Sheriff.
- **Secretary to the Governor:** Responsible for the administration of the colony and for transcribing all public despatches issued by the Governor.
- **Commissary:** Responsible for all Government provisions and stores, including keeping track of receipts, purchases and expenditure. Has deputies in Parramatta and Hawkesbury to look after stores in those locations.
- **Chaplains:** Responsible for holding Divine services throughout the colony and undertaking missionary work with the native population.
- **Principal Surgeon:** Responsible for operation of the colony's hospitals. Has deputy surgeons, one stationed with him in Sydney, another in Parramatta, another at Coal River (after 1804), and a fourth at Norfolk Island.
- **Surveyor-General of Lands:** Responsible for surveying land, granting leases, and building roads.
- **Boatbuilder and Shipwright:** Responsible for running the dockyards which keep Government vessels in good repair.
- **Nine Superintendents:** These are individuals responsible for particular activities.
  - Superintendent of Government Herds (cattle, sheep, horses, etc. owned by the Government);
  - Superintendent of Public Labour (works undertaken by convict gangs);
  - Superintendent of Public Buildings;
  - Superintendent of Blacksmiths;
  - Head Constable at Parramatta;
  - Superintendent of Manufactories at Parramatta;
  - Superintendent of Government Mills;
  - Superintendent of Agricultural Settlement at Castle Hill;
  - Storekeeper at Coal River (after 1804).
- **Various Magistrates.**
- **Naval Officer:** Responsible for vessels arriving and leaving the port of Sydney; is charged with going aboard all arriving vessels and delivering the Port Orders.

European investigators will almost certainly have been born in either Great Britain or Ireland. The mix of convict backgrounds will vary slightly depending on which part of era the game is set – prior to 1800 most convicts are British (but may come from any part of England, Scotland or Wales); after 1800 about half of all newly-arriving convicts are Irish. Although far less common, there are some in the colony who have more unusual backgrounds – mostly hailing from other European

seafaring nations (Spain, France) or occasionally America. Such exotic individuals usually have come to New South Wales aboard trade ships which have visited in the hope of selling goods.

## Skills

Investigators in late 18<sup>th</sup> Century (or early 19<sup>th</sup> Century) New South Wales have skills derived from a slightly modified list, as shown below. Unless



## CONVICTS & CTHULHU

otherwise noted, skills are defined as per the *Call of Cthulhu*, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition rules. This collection of skills is reflected on the *Convicts & Cthulhu* character sheet on page 95.

Accounting (5%)  
Alcheringa Dream Lore (00% or 05% for Aboriginal Investigators)\*  
Animal Handling (15%) +  
Appraise (15%) +  
Art/Craft (Farming, other) (5%)  
Charm (15%) +++  
Climb (20%)  
Credit Rating (00%) \*\*  
Cthulhu Mythos (00%)  
Disguise (05%)  
Dodge (half DEX)  
Dream Song (00% or fifth-POW for Aboriginal Investigators)\*  
Drive Horse/Oxen/Cart (20%)  
Fast Talk (5%)  
Fighting (Brawl) (25%)  
Fighting (various)  
Firearms (Flintlock) (20%)  
Firearms (Musket) (25%)  
Firearms (Shotgun) (25%)  
First Aid (30%)  
History (5%)  
Insight (5%) \*\*\*  
Intimidate (15%)  
Jump (20%)  
Language (Other) (1%)  
Language (Own) (1%)\*\*\*\*  
Law (5%)  
Library Use (5%)  
Listen (20%)  
Locksmith (1%)  
Lore (Aboriginal) (1%)\*  
Mechanical Repair (10%)  
Medicine (1%)  
Natural World (10%)  
Navigate (10%)  
Occult (5%)  
Operate Heavy Machinery (1%)  
Persuade (10%)

Pilot (Ship) (1%)  
Religion (20%) ++  
Ride (5%)  
Science (various) (1%)  
Sleight of Hand (10%)  
Spot Hidden (25%)  
Stealth (20%)  
Survival (various) (10%)  
Swim (5%) +  
Throw (20%)  
Track (10%)

### Notes:

- \* See Chaosium's *Secrets of Australia* for information about this skill.
- \*\* See the box nearby regarding the importance of Credit Rating in the colony
- \*\*\* For pre-19<sup>th</sup> Century eras the skill "Insight" performs a similar function to the normal Psychology skill
- \*\*\*\* Not everyone in the NSW colony – whether convict or soldier – is literate. This is reflected by the lower starting value for Own Language. See also the note nearby regarding literacy.
- + Has different base percentage to normal to represent the relative ubiquity of this skill during the era relative to the 1920s. People in the NSW colony are generally more skilled at animal handling and appraising the value of items (a prerequisite of effective barter) but few people know how to swim well.
- ++ The new skill Religion covers knowledge of the forms and practices of traditional European worship including different Christian faiths and recognizances. It does not include knowledge of Aboriginal mythology or religion which is reflected in the Alcheringa Dream Lore and Lore (Aboriginal) skills.
- +++ In *Convicts & Cthulhu*, the skill Charm also covers any character attempts at "bootlicking" someone with power over them. This was an established way of gaining favour, with convicts currying favour with overseers and enlisted soldiers bowing and scraping to officers. This is usually employed to gain some advantage.



## The Importance of Credit Rating

In the absence of sufficient amounts of legal currency, trade is often conducted through barter or the issuing of promissory notes (see page 27). In this environment Credit Rating becomes vital. Keepers can opt to have investigators roll **Credit Rating** anytime a currency-based exchange takes place. Success means a promissory note or other agreement to pay has been accepted. For this reason most officials and military officers have extremely high Credit Rating in the colony. This would not be transferrable if the character was taken out of this setting, in which case halve the skill.

## Literacy

These rules apply to investigators and NPCs alike. Keepers should decide if characters are able to read or write. As a rule of thumb, all officers and officials are literate, farmers and emancipist traders are semi-literate, and convicts illiterate. Obviously, exceptions exist.

- **Literate:** Use character's native Language as normal for reading and writing. No test is needed unless it is a Mythos tome or something equally obscure.
- **Semi-Literate:** Use character's native Language as normal for reading and writing but all reading must be tested by a Hard roll. Double all reading times.
- **Illiterate:** Cannot read or write at all.

## Effects of Drunkenness

Drunkenness is not uncommon in the colony. A few sips of rum does not impede an investigator but drinking an entire bottle would. The table below provides some abstract guidelines.

Consumption	Example	Effect
Low	1-2 glasses	No impairment
Medium	3-4 glasses	Make a CON roll: if failed, all skill and characteristic roll difficulties are increased by one level for 1D4 hours.
High	5-6 glasses	Make a CON roll: if failed, all skill and characteristic roll difficulties are increased by one level for 4 hours.
Excessive	7+ glasses	Make a CON roll: if failed, all skill and characteristic roll difficulties are increased by one level for 4 hours. In addition, all rolls in this period also suffer from one penalty die.



## Character Templates

The following sections provide some possible investigator occupations for indigenous, convict and non-convict European characters in the colony.

## INDIGENOUS OCCUPATIONS

### HUNTER/GATHERER

Occupational Skills: Alcheringa Lore, Art/Craft (any), Fighting or Throw, Listen, Lore (Aboriginal), Natural World, Stealth, Survival (Bush)

Credit Rating: 0—99 (within Aboriginal community)

Occupation Skill Points:  $\text{EDU} \times 2$  + either  $\text{DEX} \times 2$  or  $\text{STR} \times 2$

### CLEVER-MAN or WOMAN

Occupational Skills: Alcheringa Lore, Dream Song, First Aid, Lore (Aboriginal), Medicine, Natural World, Occult or Track or Fighting, Survival (Bush)

Credit Rating: 50—99 (within the Aboriginal community)

Occupation Skill Points:  $\text{EDU} \times 2$  + either  $\text{DEX} \times 2$  or  $\text{POW} \times 2$



## INDIGENOUS CONVICT / LABOURER

Aboriginal people who have become convicts or have taken up (poorly) paid positions as labourers in the colony may be created using the appropriate Convict template below, with the following modifications: Credit Rating range is 0-5; replace two Occupational Skills with Lore (Aboriginal) and Survival (Bush).

## CONVICT OCCUPATIONS

The Credit Rating range for convict professions depends on whether the investigator is currently serving his or her sentence, has been granted a ticket-of-leave, or has been granted a pardon. The ranges are as follows:

- Serving sentence: Credit Rating 1-10
- Ticket-of-leave: 10-29
- Conditional Pardon: 20-35
- Full Pardon: 25-45

## CAREER CRIMINAL

Occupational Skills: Appraise, Art/Craft (Acting), Insight, Law, Sleight of Hand, Spot Hidden, two interpersonal skills (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade)

Credit Rating: See note above

Occupation Skill Points:  $\text{EDU} \times 2$  + either  $\text{DEX} \times 2$  or  $\text{APP} \times 2$

## DOMESTIC SERVANT

Occupational Skills: Appraise, Art/Craft (any, e.g., Cook, Tailor), Drive Horse/Oxen/Cart, Insight, Listen, Natural World, Spot Hidden, any two other skills as personal or era specialties

Credit Rating: See note above

Occupation Skill Points:  $\text{EDU} \times 2$  + either  $\text{APP} \times 2$  or  $\text{POW} \times 2$

## DOWN-ON-LUCK CRAFTSMAN

Occupational Skills: Appraise, Art/Craft (any two, including specialties like Blacksmith), Fighting (Brawl), Locksmith, Mechanical Repair, Operate Heavy Machinery, one other skill as personal specialty.

Credit Rating: See note above

Occupation Skill Points:  $\text{EDU} \times 2$  +  $\text{DEX} \times 2$

## FALLEN CLERGYMAN

Occupational Skills: Accounting, History, Insight, Language (Latin), Language (Own), Library Use, Listen, Religion, one interpersonal skill (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade)

Credit Rating: See note above

Occupation Skill Points:  $\text{EDU} \times 4$

## POLITICAL AGITATOR

Occupational Skills: Disguise, Fighting, Firearms, First Aid, Insight, Spot Hidden, Stealth, one interpersonal skill (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade)

Credit Rating: See note above

Occupation Skill Points:  $\text{EDU} \times 2$  + either  $\text{APP} \times 2$  or  $\text{POW} \times 2$

## LABOURER

Occupational Skills: Climb, Drive Horse/Oxen/Cart, Jump, Fighting (Brawl), Natural World, Ride, Throw, any one other skill as a personal specialty.

Credit Rating: See note above

Occupation Skill Points:  $\text{EDU} \times 2$  + either  $\text{DEX} \times 2$  or  $\text{STR} \times 2$

## FREEMAN OCCUPATIONS

### DOCTOR

Occupational Skills: First Aid, Insight, Language (Latin), Medicine, Natural World, Science (Biology), any two other skills as academic or personal specialties.

Credit Rating: 30—80

Occupation Skill Points:  $\text{EDU} \times 4$

### FARMER SETTLER

Occupational Skills: Art/Craft (Farming), Drive Horse/Oxen/Cart, Firearms (Musket), Natural World, Ride, Track, one interpersonal skill (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade), any one other skill as a personal specialty.

Credit Rating: 30—70

Occupation Skill Points:  $\text{EDU} \times 2$  + either  $\text{DEX} \times 2$  or  $\text{STR} \times 2$



**LAWYER**

Occupational Skills: History, Intimidate, Insight, Language (Own), Law, Library Use, Listen, Persuade

Credit Rating: 50—80

Occupation Skill Points: EDU×4

**MERCHANT**

Occupational Skills: Accounting, Appraise, Insight, Law, Sleight of Hand, Spot Hidden, two interpersonal skills (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade)

Credit Rating: 9—70

Occupation Skill Points: EDU×2 + either APP×2 or POW×2

**NSW CORPS OFFICER**

Occupational Skills: Disguise or Dodge, Fighting, Firearms, First Aid, Intimidate, Listen, Stealth, any one other skill as a personal speciality.

Credit Rating: 20—70

Occupation Skill Points: EDU×2 + either DEX×2 or STR×2

**PUBLICAN (BAR OWNER)**

Occupational Skills: Accounting, Appraise, Fighting (Brawl), Insight, Listen, Stealth, two interpersonal skills (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade)

Credit Rating: 8—45

Occupation Skill Points: EDU×2 + APP×2

***Life As A Convict***

Players who choose to take on convict roles will find that, although life is very hard for such characters they also have access to people and places that other higher-classed character simply cannot reach. In particular, there exists a general “code of silence” among the convict community with respect to answering questions from Government officials or military officers – most would prefer to go to the scaffold rather than inform on their fellows. This means that whenever a scenario or campaign

calls for interacting with a convict (for example as the witness to some horrible supernatural event or murder) it will always be far easier for a convict character to investigate via direct questioning. Everyone else will simply hit a wall of silence.

The following provides some detail about the harsh life of convicts during this era, which players and Keepers might find helpful in filling in the vivid details.

**A DAY IN THE LIFE**

Convicts in government service are clothed and fed by the Government; those in private service are clothed and fed by their Masters. They work a nine hour day (typically sunup to sunset with an hour’s break) five days a week plus a five hour day on Saturdays. Convicts have Sunday as a day of rest, but are (in theory) obliged to attend religious service. Outside of these hours they can sell their private labour as they wished, with wages usually consisting of rum.

On a work gang or in gaol convicts are mustered for a roll call 5 times a day: at 5:00am, 9:00am, 2:00pm, sunset and 8:00pm. Convicts assigned to a private master did not need to attend muster except where their master feels the need to keep track of them.

Convicts sometimes escape but rarely successfully. They usually flee into the bush where often they starve, are killed by natives, or brought back by Aboriginal people for a reward. Some try to escape in small boats which usually founder because of high seas and lack of any sailing skill. When they are brought back to the colony they are usually sent to a place of secondary punishment (a convict settlement with even harsher punishments) or hanged.

**CONVICT PUNISHMENTS**

Punishment for convicts tends to be flogging, ordered by the Governor or a magistrate, the latter of whom are usually military officers and not noted for their fine judgment. Unlike in the early days of the colony, a convict’s Master in this era cannot flog him without his first appearing in court. In this period, women convicts may also be flogged, although this is less frequent. The punishment is usually given within the gaol grounds, rather than public.

The convict is tied to a triangle shaped frame with the apex at the top where his or her hands



are bound. The convict is then lashed with a whip with nine tips, called a “cat of nine tails.” The person administering the punishment is usually another convict, who would risk themselves be flogged if they lay on the lash too lightly. Friends are often forced to lash friends, in an effort to break down any bonds that might lead to escapes or other trouble.

The number of lashes can vary, with one thousand being the maximum (remarkably some even survived this). Typically the average sentence is 20-40 lashes. Two Hundred and Fifty lashes was known as a ‘feeler’ because you really felt it. If Keepers are stuck roll a D100 and halve it. If the convict is especially troublesome or insubordinate don’t halve it.

Convicts can also be punished by being sentenced to work gangs breaking rocks, by being forced to wear leg irons, or being sent to a place of secondary punishment such as Norfolk Island or Coal River. The ultimate punishment is death by hanging (“rope, soap and calico for one” as the convicts call it).

**Keeper’s Note:** If investigator convicts are flogged, they should be required to make a **Hard CON** roll. The damage they accrue from the experience depends on the level of success or failure of this roll:

- **Extreme:** 1D10 damage for the whole flogging, no matter how brutal.
- **Hard:** 1D3 damage for every 50 lashes.
- **Regular Success:** 1D6 damage for every 50 lashes.
- **Failure:** 1D4 damage for every 20 lashes, which could mean they are flogged to death if the punishment is high enough.
- **Fumble:** 1D20+5 for the flogging and any sentence over 50 lashes automatically kills them.

This roll can be pushed, although failure of a Pushed roll is likely to result in the convict character literally bleeding out from his or her wounds.

## Gear & Equipment

The Keeper should endeavour to highlight the very primitive nature of life in the New South Wales colony. Even by late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century standards, existence in this remote and isolated part of the world is as basic as can be imagined.



A TRIANGLE AND CAT OF NINE TAILS

There are four main factors that govern this:

- **Inability to exploit local resources:** With the exception of logging trees for lumber and manually quarrying stone for buildings and coal for fuel, the New South Wales colony at this time has no ability to use the (ironically abundant) natural resources that surround them. While significant inroads are made during the period into establishing self-sufficient sources of food (mainly vegetables and meat from imported cows and sheep), even on such basic matters the survival of the population hangs by a thread – if crops fail, or the supply ship from England runs late people need to literally tighten their belts for fear of mass-starvation. Most equipment for the colony must come on a ship from England. This makes everything a finite and expensive resource – for example, while there are skills and tools to allow iron goods to be “recycled” by a blacksmith into other implements, there is no way to smelt new iron. This limitation has a profound impact on the types of items that



## The Flash Language: Convict Slang

Convicts had their own slang or cant known as Flash language. An educated convict compiled a whole dictionary which can be found free online at Australian Gutenberg: <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks06/0600111.txt>

Some sample terms are:

- Charley – a watchman.
- Darbie'd – put in chains.
- Knuckler – a pickpocket.
- Lag – a convict under sentence of transportation.
- Lush – beer or rum or other liquor.
- Lushy Cove – a drunken man.
- Nose – someone who informs on his or her accomplices. Also the act of informing.
- Rump'd – flogged.
- Swoddy – a soldier.
- Up in the Stirrups – having lots of money.

are generally available – if it isn't important enough for the Colonial Office to pay to have shipped half-way round the world, chances are it won't be found in New South Wales (unless brought as a small item of personal belongings by a soldier or Government official).

- **Unreliable and expensive trade routes from anywhere 'civilised':** The colony has now been established long enough that trade merchants of several different nationalities occasionally pay it a visit (usually in an attempt to peddle sub-standard goods at ludicrous prices). However, the geographical remoteness of this God-forsaken place makes any such trade voyages irregular and risky. Commonly traded goods such as rum are available by such means, although (as explained in the section on the "Rum Economy", page 9) the social situation in the New South Wales colony during this era means that it is usually only the military elite that benefits. In some places the Government's efforts to discourage contact between convicts and the outside world also prohibits

or severely restricts merchant ships' ability to land and trade with residents of the colony.

- **Unwillingness to expend resources on a far-off penal colony:** New South Wales was not set up to be an enjoyable place to live, but rather a fearsome and harsh prison. To the 18<sup>th</sup> Century mind it was ludicrous to propose that such a place was worth anything but the most meagre and basic of equipment and provisions. Anything better would be wasted on the prisoners, and would only work against the generation of fear back in Britain (which was imagined might deter criminals from their evil ways). Because of these attitudes, the hand-me-down equipment which is shipped to New South Wales is often of the most miserly and primitive variety available to the government of the day – the only exception to this being equipment which ensured the subjugation of the prison population and the impossibility that any convict might ever escape to return home to England.
- **Mechanisation versus Manual Labour:** Most technology of the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries is designed to mechanise tasks to remove the need for back-breaking manual labour. However, in the prison colony there is an ever-ready (if not always ever-willing) source of the latter. This means that for most problems that could be solved by mechanical means it is far easier and cheaper to simply employ a crew of convicts to do the job by manual means. This sometimes results in men working in horrifically dangerous or damaging situations, but in the eyes of their gaolers this is a positive: the more taxing and debilitating the task, the less likely the convicts are to have excess energy to cause problems. Plus, particularly hazardous jobs (such as the manual extraction of coal) can be reserved as a punishment, serving as a deterrent to unruly behaviour.

The Keeper should keep these things in mind as he or she describes the kind of "technology" available. Generally, things are basic to the point of pre-industrial Europe. Manual labour or animal labour is the only common power to drive equipment or vehicles. Elaborate items that exist in the colony (for example wind-up clocks) would be extremely rare items that are usually prized possessions of



someone important – the fact that they have been brought with them half-way around the world means that they are likely to want to protect them from theft at the hands of ranks of convict pilferers, probably by concealing them somehow.

While books and papers are important to the running of the colony – and in particular the maintaining of each convict's record of time served (and misdemeanours observed) – only certain groups of people within the colony would ever have reason to own such things. For most convicts the only documents they might possess are the handful of letters written to them by loved ones back in England. Because literacy is relatively rare among convicts (and even among some of the soldier classes) it is not uncommon for illiterate people to require others to read documents to them, including personal letters they have received. Such individuals would usually rely on those same colleagues to write any replies as dictated. This of course relies on the translator reliably performing his or her task – something that might not be the case if motivation exists to skew the message to the translator's advantage.

## Pay and Victuals

Investigators who are convicts will typically earn no income, but will also be fed and housed at the expense of the Government. Typical weekly rations for a convict might consist of seven pounds of salted beef or four pounds of salted pork, eight pounds of flour or meal, peas or other similar pulse vegetable, and a little over three pounds of sugar. The convict was expected to prepare his or her own meals from these basic provisions using the primitive facilities available at the gaol.

Ticket-of-Leave convicts and emancipated convicts (i.e., those who had served out their sentence) are provided no support, and expected to find employment for themselves to buy food and other items. Many of these people end up working as servants for free settlers or NSW Corps officers, a job whose pay frequently involved full board (usually the same types of food provided to convicts). The average yearly income for a servant with board is £10.

NSW Corps soldiers and other military personnel are also paid and provisioned by the Government with the level of their pay proportional to their rank. Such individuals are not entitled to free board from

to Commissariat. Soldiers receive their pay from the relevant Paymaster – in Sydney and Parramatta, these are individuals who also run very lucrative private side lines in selling goods via a kind of General Store. For this reason – and also because of general unavailability of coins and banknotes – the Paymasters are always keen to encourage people to accept their pay in goods from the store rather than in hard currency. Doing so gives the paymaster a clear profit (since their ticket prices include a sizeable amount of fat above the true cost of the item). This lucrative perk was an important source of income for John Macarthur during his time as NSW Corps Paymaster and his successor Anthony Fenn Kemp is eager to keep the scam running under his watch (see page 41). A soldier's yearly pay could be anywhere from £60 to £350.

Free settlers are expected to produce their own income, either as profits of their trade (if they run a store or provide a service) or by selling goods grown or on their property. For many this is a fairly variable form of pay, affected by many factors including the seasons – investigator's whose income derives primarily from the land (farmers, etc.) have an annual income of £80+4D20; those who offer professional services in the townships have annual income of £120+4D10. Merchants who profit from the importation of goods can potentially earn as much as £400 in a year, although may need to pay a substantial proportion of that to corrupt officials and NSW Corps officers as a "cost of doing business." Senior officials in the Colonial Government including magistrates might earn up to £600 per annum.

## AN ENGLISH DIET

The table below gives an indication of the types of food commonly grown and sold in New South Wales during this era. Fortunately, agriculture has advanced significantly since the earliest days of the settlement (when the colony relied wholly on food shipped from England and nearly starved on several occasions when such shipments were delayed or lost). With the exception locally-caught fish and Kangaroo meat – used occasionally as a substitute for beef – all types of food eaten by settlers are varieties introduced from Europe.

Beef, Mutton, or Lamb	1s/3d per lb
Pork or Goat-Mutton	1s per lb
Kangaroo meat	8d per lb
Turkey	10s



Goose	8s
Duck	4s
Muscovy Duck	5s
Fowl	2s/6d
Rabbit	4s
Pigeon	1s/3d
Kid (juvenile goat)	5s
Roasting pig	5s
Eggs	1s/6d per doz
Butter	6s per lb
Milk	1s per quart
Cheese	2s/6d per lb
Fish	4d per lb
Oysters	1s per quart
Wheat	12s per bushel
Maize or Barley	5s per bushel
Potatoes	10s per cwt
Turnips	4d per bunch
Carrots	6d per bunch
Cabbage	3d
Lemons	6d per doz
Peaches	2d per doz
Apples or Quinces	2s per doz
Apricots	1s per doz
Cucumber	1d
Artichoke	6d
Mushrooms	8d per quart
Asparagus	2s per hundred
Beans	9d per quart
Pumpkin	6d
Cauliflower	6d
Onions	20s per cwt

The price of rum is notionally set by the Government at 20 shillings per gallon, although in practice the price varied according to the current availability (increasing significantly once the crackdown on importation of spirits began in earnest).

## Owning, Buying and Stealing Gear

Eventually, investigators will find themselves in situations where they need to acquire particular items – or to take advantage of personal possessions they likely already own. The following guidelines provide some suggestions which the Keeper can use as a starting point for determining the relative ease with which equipment can be obtained by characters in different social strata.

## A Variety of Coins

Although the official currency of the colony is the English pound and its divisions, the presence of other currency meant that a kind of “exchange rate” was published to allow for foreign coins to also be accepted as legal tender. The following rate from 1800 gives an indication of the variety of coins in circulation:

Coin	Value
Guinea	£1 and 2 shillings
Johannes (Portuguese)	£4
Half Johannes (Portuguese)	£2
Ducat (Batavian Republic)	9s/6d
Gold Mohur (India)	£1 and 17 shillings
Pagoda (India)	8s
Spanish Dollar	5s
Rupree (India)	2s/6d
Dutch Guilder	2s
English Shilling	1s/1d
Any copper coin weighing 1oz	2d
Any copper coin weighing ¼ oz	½d

## A NOTE ABOUT CURRENCY AND TRADE

While technically the primary form of legal currency in the New South Wales colony is the British Pound (each pound being worth 12 shillings or 240 pence), the fact that hard coinage is in short supply forces many deals and debts to be conducted without actual money changing hands. There are a number of ways this can occur:

- **True Barter** – the simplest form of non-cash exchanges are those where two parties simply agree on an equitable exchange of goods of different types (“two sheep in exchange for a musket, shot and powder horn” or “a gallon of rum in exchange for the musty old tome”).
- **Promissory Notes for Currency** – these are the equivalent of I.O.U.’s; basically the buyer promising to pay some quantity of money to the seller within some agreed time period, on presentation of the note. These are convenient ways to get around not having hard currency right now ... but loss or theft of the



promissory note is a constant concern for those that hold them (and the official NSW Gazette newssheet contains almost as many private advertisements asking finders to return lost promissory notes as it does advertisements proclaiming a colonist is shortly departing for England and anybody who wants their promises redeemed should do so before that date).

- **Promissory Notes for Non-Currency Commodities** – these are effectively the same, but instead of promising to pay an agreed sum of money at a future date it binds the buyer to providing an agreed amount of some other resource in the future. Until the practice was outlawed in January 1806, promissory notes for gallons of rum were very commonly issued.
- **“Buying” and “Selling” Promissory Notes** – once a promissory note is written, it is not uncommon for it to be traded onwards in exchange for some further goods or services. So, for example, someone who has a promissory note from a merchant for a sum of money and who needs to pay a similar amount to a publican to settle his bar tab might just give the publican the promissory note to settle the debt. The key is that the note is a promise to pay out whoever is the current bearer of the note (who may or may not have been the person to whom it was first issued). In this way, Promissory Notes are a true form of currency which people can readily trade as an alternative form of paper money. Of course, they differ from real currency in one important way – promissory notes come with few guarantees that they will be redeemable.

## COUNTERFEITING

Although the colony has only been established for two decades or less and relies far more on barter than on paper money, there have already been several cases where enterprising convicts have tried their hand at forgery. Counterfeiters might aim to copy the official currency in circulation, but it's usually far easier to simply forge promissory notes from wealthy individuals. Wily investigators who aim to enrich themselves by such schemes will need to be skilful in their deceit – in a colony full of criminals and former criminals, many people are very distrustful and suspicious of documents.

Would-be forgers might also be well advised that the Government of the colony takes a very dim view on forgery: the cases that have been detected and tied back to a perpetrator have all ended with that individual swinging from a scaffold. In the eyes of those in power, counterfeiting as a crime is second only to murder.

## PERSONAL POSSESSIONS

The following lists give some suggestions of the types of items that would be readily available to different investigator groups as items of personal property (i.e., things which could credibly be owned by the investigator at the start of a scenario).

**Convicts** – Handkerchief, gaming aids (dice, marbles, pack of cards), shiv (handmade knife made of a piece of metal with canvas wrapped around one end as a handle), uniform, shoes, hat, empty flask for grog, tattoos and flogging marks.

## Local Industries

Aside from the raising of animals and crops for food, there are a small number of industries that have been successfully established in New South Wales. These include:

- Spinning and weaving of textiles at the Female Factory in Parramatta
- Blacksmithing of many types of iron implements
- Brewing of beer
- Baking of bread (when sufficient grain is available)
- Tanning leather from the skins of cattle, kangaroo and seals
- Potteries manufacturing dishes, plates, teapots and similar items
- Manufacture of tobacco pipes
- Extraction of salt from sea water
- Milling (grinding) of grain in windmills
- Making of bricks
- Illegal distillation of spirits using hidden stills

There are also several shops in Sydney and a few in Parramatta where imported European goods – mostly clothing – may be purchased. Auction houses in Sydney and Parramatta sell a variety of different goods (charging 5% on sale price).



**NSW Corps Officers** – Uniform, weapons, ammunition, jar of grog, promissory note for 2 more jars of grog, a room in the barracks and a small house in town. May own a horse if especially well off.

**Government Officials** – Good clothes and shoes, fob watch, ledger, pen and ink set, silver flask for grog, instruments of trade (e.g., surveying equipment, medical bag); may carry a Bible if religious. Would live in a home perhaps out of the city on farming land if wealthy, a house in town if not.

**Free Settlers (town)** – Town clothes and shoes, bandana, handkerchief, letter from home, a few bolts of muslin cloth for trade, flask for grog; may have a firearm. Would have a shop and house in town, perhaps even combined in one.

**Farmers & Free Settlers (rural)** – Farming tools, firearms, a good knife, rugged clothes, cabbage tree hat, a short length of stout rope, a large bottle for grog. Would probably have a small farm, some livestock and enough feed for a week.

## REQUISITIONING FROM THE COMMISSARIAT

While all investigators will have some amount of personal gear and possessions (although for convicts that may be remarkably meagre), those working for the colony in an administrative or military role will also have limited ability to requisition items from the colony's stores. In Sydney and

Parramatta this means dealing with the town's Commissariat – the officer who acts as a custodian for all government owned assets. In more remote places such as the Coal River settlement it means dealing with the barracks quartermaster. While the stores maintained in each location have a diversity of different types of equipment – including many of the things investigators may want to obtain – it is not always easy to petition for requested goods to be supplied. Most often the officials placed in positions of managing government stockpiles are chosen based on their stinginess and willingness to deny all but the most obviously necessary requests.

Investigators may wish to try requisitioning goods from a commissary or quartermaster – if they need large items such as carts or specialised items such as surveying equipment this will be a necessity. The Keeper should judge all requests based on the three factors noted below and assign a difficulty (**Normal**, **Hard** or **Extreme**) to the request. Success with a **Persuade** roll of the appropriate difficulty results in the item being begrudgingly granted (don't even bother trying to **Fast Talk** or **Intimidate** people in those roles – they have seen it all before – and most are simply too obtuse to be **Charmed**).

The factors that might affect the difficulty of requisitioning an item are:

- The **value or scarcity** of the item: common items are easy to get, but it is much harder to have rare items issued and nigh impossible to be given items which are unique in the colony (such as the colony's only printing press).
- The **rank of the person making the request** (or by whose authority the item is being requested): lowly NSW Corps officers struggle to be given even half-broken items, while a letter from the Governor stating that the individual is mounting an expedition on his behalf will likely unlock every coffer.
- The degree to which the Commissary or Quartermaster **likes the person** making the request: the decision to grant or deny a request is a decision made by one official and their decision is literally the last word on the matter. Like all petty officials, those in charge of issuing equipment are prone to wielding that arbitrary power to favour those they like and disadvantage those they do not.

## Entertainments

Daily life in the colony is largely taken up with work during the daylight hours, but opportunities exist for entertainment on Sundays and in the evenings.

The most popular form of amusement among convicts is drunken gambling, often in the form of card games. Some gamble to excess: cases have been reported to authorities where a convict has continued betting even to the point of losing the clothing he was wearing.

Soldiers and free settlers are more likely to engage in more refined types of entertainment: cricket, water parties, fishing and kangaroo hunting are all popular diversions. Some officers in the colony also make use of a private billiards room in the barracks, available only to men who pay a subscription.



Convicts are also “provided for” from the coffers of the colony, but this generosity does not extend to much more than a minimal amount of food to keep them from starving. Where a convict work gang is issued equipment for their day’s labours (e.g., to cut down lumber) the Commissary would actually sign the items out to the military officer who is supervising the gang, who incidentally also signs for temporary possession of the convicts themselves!

## BETTER LIVING THROUGH STEALING

Of course investigators who need equipment may choose to simply try to purloin it, either by breaking into the Commissariat or stealing the items from a private residence or public barracks. Theft is relatively common within the colony ... but before investigators embark on such thievery, the Keeper should make them aware of the rather draconian penalties that are applied for common larceny. At the very minimum those discovered stealing minor items are likely to receive a generous number of lashes on the triangle (the exact number is at the whim of the sentencing Magistrate – it could be anywhere up to 200 lashes or more, particularly if the judge is offended or appalled by the perpetrator’s deeds). For being convicted of more serious theft – such as a valuable old book from the Governor’s personal library – felons are unlikely to escape a short, fatal trip to the scaffold.

## Common Weapons

For most hand-to-hand and ranged weapons, the Keeper can simply use the weapon statistics found in the *Call of Cthulhu 7<sup>th</sup> Edition Rules* (for example treating the bayonette optionally attached to NSW Corp muskets as a large knife). Statistics may be found nearby for firearms available in the colony as well as common Aboriginal weapons (the latter are reprinted nearby from Chaosium’s *Secrets of Australia*).

## FIREARMS

Despite the fact that the technology required to create more accurate rifled firearms exists in Europe by the time of this setting, it is highly unlikely that any true rifles are to be found in the New South Wales colony until at least the 1820s. For this setting, the Keeper should assume that the only firearms that are commonly available are older black powder weapons – the famous “Brown Bess” musket being the mainstay of the military. The statistics included in the following table are inspired by Kevin Ross’ *Colonial Lovecraft Country* setting published by Sixtystone Press.

**Flintlock Pistol:** commonly found in pairs (a “brace of pistols”) these hand-held firearms are carried mostly by non-military types who require protection either in the settled areas or – more commonly – when they venture out into the unknown bushland.

**Musket:** The most common military firearms, common amongst British troops such as the NSW Corps. Normally only used by foot troops.

**Carbine:** Shorter-barrelled versions of the Musket created to make it easier to fire from horseback; otherwise very similar to the Musket.

**Fowling Piece:** A type of smoothbore double-barrelled shotgun used almost exclusively for hunting wildlife.

**Black Powder:** All of the firearms described above make use of Black Powder and must be muzzle loaded by filling the barrel with powder (usually from a powder horn carried by the firer), adding the bullet or shot, and tamping down with a metal rod. Such firearms are nearly useless in wet weather or any time that moisture affects the powder. They also require a lot of cleaning and maintenance – a weapon that has not been fired for a long time might have a considerably worse Malfunction score than typical, and may even explode in the firer’s face.

## Colonial Firearms

Weapon	skill	damage	rate of fire	ammo	base range(yds)	malf
Flintlock Pistol	Firearm (Flintlock)	1D6+1	¼	1	10	95
Musket	Firearm (Musket)	1D10+4	¼	1	100	95
Carbine	Firearm (Musket)	1D10+4	¼	1	70	95
Fowling Piece	Firearm (Shotgun)	4D6/2D6/1D6	⅓	2	10/20/50	95

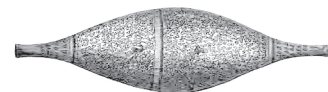




Boomerangs



Clubs



Shields



Woomeras



Spears

## Aboriginal Weapons

### Melee Weapons

	damage	base chance
Stone Axe	1D6+1+DB	20%
Club	1D8+ DB	25%
Heavy Spear (2H)*	1D8+1+ DB	10%
Light Spear (1H)*	1D6+1+ DB	10%

### Missile Weapons

	damage	rate of fire	base chance	range(yds)
War Boomerang	1D8 + half DB	1/2	Throw%	STR × 3/5
Light Boomerang**	1D3 + half DB	1/2	Throw%	STR × 4/5
Thrown Heavy Spear	1D8+1 + half DB	1/2	Throw%	STR × 1/5
Thrown Light Spear	1D6+1 + half DB	1/2	Throw%	STR × 2/5

\*Capable of impaling.

\*\*This boomerang returns to the thrower if it misses the target, others do not.

An Aboriginal warrior skilled with spears may choose to make use of a Woomera, a wooden device use in conjunction with the spear to enhance its range and deadliness by improving the velocity of the thrown spear. Using a Woomera halves the rate of fire for a spear but doubles its range and adds +1D6 to damage. It requires a successful roll against the thrower's **Fighting (Woomera)** skill, failure of which negates any advantage.



An enterprising character may decide to use black powder on its own as an explosive, for example to blow up a locked door or box. In general a small quantity (such as may be found in a powder horn) delivers 2D6 damage to a 2 yard radius while a large keg might deliver 4D6 damage to a 5 yard radius (at the Keeper's discretion).

## Investigating in the Colony

Traditional *Call of Cthulhu* scenarios rely on investigators having ready access to a variety of different sources of information in order to unearth the clues which propel the story forwards. The primitive nature of the New South Wales colony precludes a few of the traditional sources of clues – for example there are no well-stocked libraries of musty tomes – but provides a range of alternative avenues for tracking down hints of the shadowy influences of the Mythos. The list below provides Keepers with some suggestions.

**The Sydney Gazette** – In order to provide basic government information to members of the military (and any free settlers who have an interest), from March 1802 the colony publishes a weekly single-sheet newsletter called the *Sydney Gazette*. While this doesn't report "news" as much as printing general orders to officers and citizens and the comings and goings of ships, much can be inferred from the details of those daily records of events. The *Gazette* is also the Governor's mouthpiece for issuing edicts to the colony as a whole, and as such most of the major changes to the colony's "laws" (for example the restriction of the rum trade) will be prominently announced in the news sheet. Finally, the *Gazette* also offers space for private advertisements by colonists (although obviously only non-convicts can place an advertisement). Many of the advertisements placed refer to financial transactions or disputes between free settlers and officers, or records of land being granted or sold. Some are simple "lost and found" type advertisements, and conceivably some could be placed by local merchants interested in selling an unusual item that has come into their possession. For Keepers interested in historical detail, scanned copies of most of the original *Sydney Gazettes* from the era covered by this setting may be viewed online for

free at [trove.nla.gov.au](http://trove.nla.gov.au). Note that there are occasional periods – sometimes months on end – when no *Gazette* is published, usually because the colony has run out of paper and is awaiting supplies from England! A similar publication is commenced in Van Diemen's Land in 1810.

**Convict Records** – Records of convicts are kept at Government House. They include ship rolls of who arrived on what vessel, records of musters, records of punishment, records of tickets of leave, records of exemptions for work, grants of land or other goods.

**Land Grants** – Grants are given to all strata of Colonial society and details of these are kept at Government House. They record the amount of land granted, where it is, and to whom it was allocated; these take the form of verbose legal documents.

**Court Records** – Colonial society is a litigious place with a large proportion of its occupants coming before the law for one reason or another. Written records are kept of all court hearings, often verbatim transcripts, and provide a detailed look at previous events. These are kept at the offices of the colony's magistrates (see page 38).

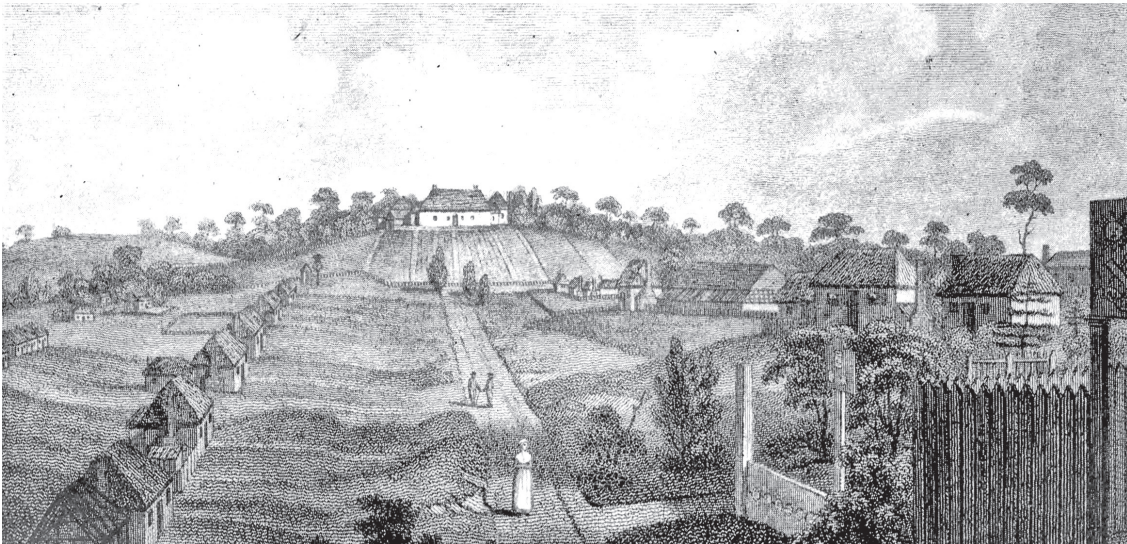
**Private Correspondence** – many people keep up a prodigious correspondence in this era, especially to those at home; usually this is also returned. Even individuals who are not themselves literate will sometimes ask a fellow convict or soldier to write down a message for loved ones back in England (or to read out aloud the private letters they receive in response). Finding someone's correspondence can be very revealing, although return letters from Britain will not be current, since they take at least six months to get to Australia.

**Government Proclamations** – The Governor makes proclamations from time to time to establish new laws or regulations for the colony; these are mostly published in the *Sydney Gazette* (see above) although proclamations affecting convicts or soldiers might also be stuck up on walls around the Gaol, barracks or other government buildings.





Farms near Parramatta



# PART III: Desperate People, Desolate Places



## A Brief Tour of Hell

The sections which follow describe the historical setting of the convict colony of New South Wales. These descriptions do not include any Mythos details (so don't go looking here to see who is a Mi-go stooge or a servant of Hastur). Consider them the blank canvas on which you will paint your own Mythos masterpiece – in your version of the colony perhaps the eccentric Frenchman at Castle Hill is an agent of the Brothers of the Skin or the eerie waters of the Hawkesbury River are home to a lloigor. Sections later in the sourcebook provide some ideas and suggestions for utilizing the darker aspects of the setting to good effect in a horror story. Also provided later are some detailed story seeds (beginning on page 76), and Keepers seeking inspiration about

using Mythos cults and gods in the penal settlement can consult the introductory scenario “Un-fresh off the Boat” (page 63) for a template.

The map on page 17 shows the majority of the colony of New South Wales. Not shown are the secondary penal settlements at Norfolk Island (in the Pacific Ocean about 1000 miles to the East North East of Sydney) and, from 1804, at Coal River (modern-day Newcastle). Both of these smaller settlements were satellites to the main New South Wales colony, each responsible for producing a specific type of natural resource (flax from Norfolk Island, coal from Coal River) under hard convict labour. Conditions at both were deliberately harsh, making the threat of being sent to one a significant way to keep the main body of convicts in line.



# Scurrilous Events & Curiosities

The following historical events are extracted from the extremely detailed records of early colonial life (see the Bibliography on page 91) and may prove useful springboards for plots of the Keeper's invention.

1793 (April 12<sup>th</sup>): "An extraordinary appearance in the sky was observed by several people between five and six o'clock in the evening ... It appeared as though a ray of forked lightning had been stationary in the sky for fifteen minutes. It was not discernable after the sun had set."

1793 (October 26<sup>th</sup>): "During a storm of rain and thunder two convicts who were employed in the cutting of wood were struck dead by lightning while they sheltered. One of the dead men was found to be clutching some object to his breast."

1794 (April): "An inflammation of the eyes was generally prevalent among all people in the colony; scarcely any person escaped the complaint."

1794 (June): "The first highway robbery was committed."

1796 (January): "Some of the more decent class of prisoners have been granted permission to build a playhouse at Sydney." This entertainment proved short-lived, since "several of the worst convicts looked on the play-house as a means of stealing goods; not by pick-pocketing but by breaking into the houses of the audience while they were enjoying themselves at the theatre."

1796 (July 9<sup>th</sup>): Curiously on this single day two similar violent crimes occurred at opposite ends of the colony. In Sydney a seaman from the *Indispensible* was shot by a convict; far away on the Hawkesbury River a free settler named John Fenlow shot and killed his convict servant, a premeditated murder. Fenlow was tried in August and sentenced to execution, his body delivered to the surgeons for dissection.

1796 (September): "A most inhuman murder was perpetrated on the body of a settler's wife at a district known as 'The Ponds.' A female neighbour was accused as an accomplice."

1796 (November): Francis Morgan, a convict convicted of murder was sentenced to an unusual punishment -- not only was he hung, but his body was placed in a gibbet on one of the islands in Sydney Harbour (a place known as "Pinchgut"). The display of the dead body seems to have been more a source of consternation for local Aborigines than the colonists.

1797 (December): During a scorching stretch of weather a large fire broke out among convict houses on the east side of Sydney "the effect of intoxication or carelessness." Several structures were destroyed.

1798 (January): Rumour arises among Irish convicts that there is an unknown settlement of civilised men some 300 or 400 miles south-west of Sydney; several escape custody to seek out this paradise but are apprehended after a lengthy pursuit by soldiers. The leaders each receive two hundred lashes.

1798 (April): A tale begins circulating amongst labourers that an old Scottish woman had received a prophetic vision that French ships were to sail into Port Jackson Bay, destroy all settlement in the colony and liberate the convicts.

1799 (July): Samuel Clode, a missionary who had come to New South Wales to flee an uprising of islanders in Tahiti is found savagely murdered in a brick fields in Sydney. "His brains were beaten out at the back of his head with an axe, and his throat cut so as to nearly sever the head from the body." Two men -- one of them a soldier -- and a woman are convicted of the murder and hanged upon the spot where the crime had been committed.

1799 (July 26<sup>th</sup>): A convict transport, the *Hillsborough*, arrives from England bearing a horrible illness. Of the three hundred convicts that embarked some 95 died during the voyage and six more perish shortly after arrival.

1801 (January 17<sup>th</sup>): "The settlement was menaced with destruction by the shock of an earthquake, felt severely throughout the colony."

1802 (November 5<sup>th</sup>): The *Atlas*, a ship in Sydney Cove commanded by Thomas Musgrove, was struck by lightning in a most peculiar way -- "although the bottom of the ship was immediately perforated by the stroke, not a man on board was injured."

1803 (February): Spurred on by the continuing rumour of an "undiscovered country" inland from New South Wales, fifteen convicts abscond from Castle Hill to search it out; some of these are recaptured but others are never found.

1803 (August): "A most inhumane murder was committed on the body of Joseph Luken, a constable." After finishing his watch he was set upon by unknown assailants "who buried the hilt of his own cutlass very deeply in his head." So bad was the wound that those discovering the body reported that in attempting to turn the corpse, their fingers became coated in the man's brains. Despite an intense military search no perpetrator was found.

1803 (September): A most unusual event occurred at the execution of Joseph Samuels, who had been convicted of burglary. Three times the man was hung, but on each occasion the apparatus failed to kill him: first the rope broke in an unprecedented way, then the knot unravelled, and on the third occasion the rope once again broke. The Provost Marshall then took pity on the condemned, whose life was subsequently spared by the Governor.

1804 (September): During a tempestuous storm the *Lady Barlow*, a ship of five hundred tons was overturned while moored in Sydney Cove.

1805 (May): In Hawkesbury, a mare gave birth to a foal without any forelegs and with a horn sprouting from its forehead.

1806 (June): Word reaches Sydney and the new settlement at Hobart Town of the shocking and violent theft of a ship, the brig *Venus*, from the small settlement at Port Dalrymple (on the northern coast of Van Diemen's Land). The "piratical" act was performed by American named Benjamin Barnett Kelly and a motley crew including convicts; fears run rampant that this scurrilous band will use the *Venus* to raid other ships.

1807 (October): Allegations made during a court hearing suggest that convicts employed to assist in Sydney's hospital were accepting bribes to keep patients admitted longer (to avoid being sent back to hard labour) or even admitting them under false pretences.

1808 (February): Shortly after Governor Bligh has been overthrown -- and while he is still imprisoned -- he is questioned about earlier plans to construct an elaborate tomb for his recently deceased son-in-law Captain Putnam; contrary to expectations, and with little explanation, the Governor says the tomb will no longer be needed.

1809: The newly-constructed road in Van Diemen's Land linking Hobart Town and Port Dalrymple has become a favourite hunting ground for a group of "bushrangers." These are a group of escaped convicts and runaway seamen (perhaps as many as 60) who have turned their back on the colony and live off the bush, shooting and killing kangaroos for food.



The only two settlements of any size in the mainland colony are Sydney township and Parramatta township. Gazetteers of both may be found below. Also included on page 51 is a description of the main sites around the Coal River settlement. A brief description of some of the more outlying farming regions of the colony can be found starting on page 53.

## Places in Sydney

Sydney was the place of first settlement and remains the largest convict township and the major port for the colony.

The map nearby shows some of the key locations in Sydney township. The pages that follow describe the buildings and people that investigators are likely to encounter as they explore this savage place. In any one scenario only a fraction of these people and places will be important; Keepers should pick those elements of the setting which best serve the story at hand and gloss over everything else (to avoid investigators getting lost in minor details).

### I. GOVERNMENT HOUSE

**Where is it:** 41 Bridge Street.

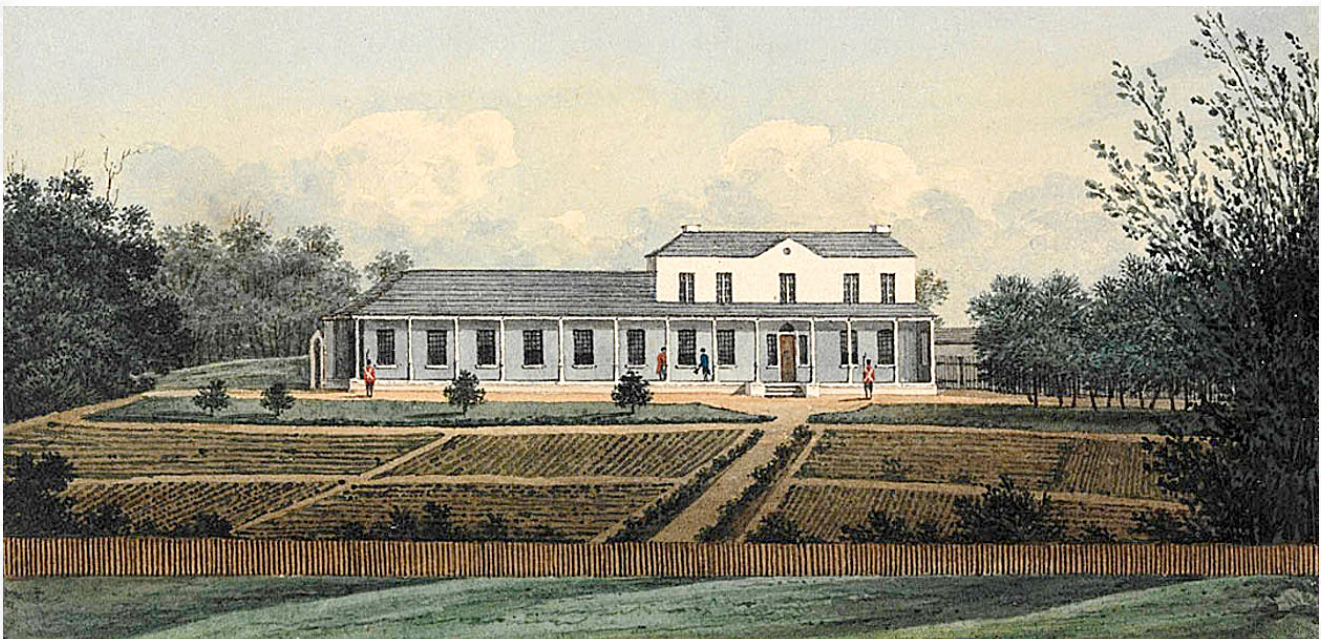
**What is it:** Government House was the first building erected in the Colony and is a two-storey building backing on to the harbour. Accounts from this era describe Government House as being in need of repair; indeed by 1817 it is entirely rebuilt.

## How many people are in the Colony?

The exact population of the colony grows during the time period covered by this setting, mostly because new convicts keep arriving from England (and few are ever allowed to return). Generally there are around 6,000 to 7,000 Europeans living in New South Wales at this time, of which perhaps only a quarter are current convicts. The rest are a combination of soldiers, officials, free settlers (those who have chosen to come to the colony to make a new life) and convicts who have either served out their terms or been pardoned.

One notable aspect of the population is the sharp disproportion of men to women – only about 18% of those living in the colony are women. This creates some obvious social problems and tensions. By the time covered by this setting there are a sizeable number of children living in the colony – some born here, some child convicts transported usually for minor theft. There are about 800 legitimate children in New South Wales and about 1,000 illegitimate ones.

Nobody really knows how many Aboriginal people live in and around the colony – they are not included in any census. Anecdotally their numbers seem to be on the wane, however, thanks to a combination of diseases introduced by Europeans and occasional white efforts to shoot Aboriginals as punishment for perceived crimes.





## CONVICTS & CTHULHU

**What happens there:** Government House is the seat of authority in the Colony, Sydney residence of the Governor and his main staff. The *Sydney Gazette* – the colony’s only “newspaper” (really a weekly government bulletin sheet with paid personal advertisements) – is also printed here in a shed out the back. There is also a Guard House.

Characters associated with the location:

- *Governor of the NSW Colony:* In the early part of the *Convicts & Cthulhu* era this is Philip Gidley King; from late 1806 William Bligh takes the position. Both are Royal Navy officers. Bligh’s biography may be found on page 13; after he is arrested during the Rum Rebellion he is kept under house arrest here.
- *The Colonial Secretary:* the Governor’s right-hand-man and civilian administrator. For much of this era this role is fulfilled by Mr Edmund Griffin, whose name graces most proclamations and notices around the colony.

**George Howe, Publisher of the *Sydney Gazette*:** George Howe is a 39 year old emancipated convict, who had been transported for life for shoplifting. His experience working on the London Times saw him chosen by Governor King to fulfil the role of Government Printer. He is also the editor of the Gazette. His printing press is a small wooden one that was brought out on the First Fleet. He is constantly facing paper and ink shortages and his subscribers not paying their debts, but manages to keep the paper going. Howe is a man of the Enlightenment, preferring reason and common sense to religion and superstition. Howe teaches reading and writing to supplement his income.

- *The Governor’s Personal Guard:* Stationed at Government House is the Governor’s Guard of 26 men, 2 sergeants and an officer of the NSW Corps. The Officer in Charge is Ensign Archibald Bell. During the Rebellion the Governor’s Guard sides with its fellows in the NSW Corps.

## 2. SYDNEY GAOL

**Where is it:** 199 George St.

**What is it:** A large and ugly stone building that is in sore need of repair. The whitewash on the surface

could use a few more coats. Included within the gaol are a separate “debtors’ prison” and six cells for condemned felons. A courtyard surrounds it with a high wall. There is a triangle in the courtyard for flogging. A small hut for the Executioner stands to one side.

**What happens there:** The convicts reside here, living in rough wooden (and usually squalid) communal sleeping sheds. Convicts stationed here work on Government sites around the town from sunup to sundown although are allowed an hour’s break in the middle of the day in the summer. Floggings and executions also take place in the courtyard.

Conceivably, investigators with some degree of influence (NSW Corps officers or senior officials in the government) may visit the Gaol to requisition convict labour for some mission of their own (or perhaps just manual work or menial jobs). For investigators in such positions, a successful **Credit Rating** will get 1D6 assigned men or women. Getting a literate convict requires a **Hard Credit Rating**. Keepers should note convicts will work hard when they are being watched, less so otherwise, and abscond rather than put their lives at risk for their Masters.

Another reason investigators might visit the Gaol is to witness floggings or hangings (hopefully not as the recipient of same). In colonial Sydney, floggings and executions are not public spectacles but rather take place within the enclosed stockade of the Gaol. Investigators who have any credible interest in such a punishment will be allowed to attend. Keepers may elect to impose a Sanity loss of 0/1 for an especially brutal flogging or a hanging, 1/1D4 if it is a friend. See the guidelines on page 23 to determine the damage inflicted by flogging.

Possible characters associated with the location:

**Chief Constable, Andrew Thompson:** The 33 year old ex-convict has been a constable since 1793, a year after his arrival. A Scotsman, he was pardoned in 1798 and built a home in the Hawkesbury and soon after was named Chief Constable. He has served with distinction in this role: investigating crimes, capturing convict runaways, acting as an intermediary with the Aboriginal peoples and was especially commended for his role in rescuing settlers during the Hawkesbury floods of 1806. He is also a merchant, with many business interests and owns five ships, including some that run from Sydney to Coal River.







# CONVICTS & CTHULHU

- *Other constables, and the colonial executioner:* The Chief Constable has a staff of men in his service, who are effectively overseers with investigative duties and the power of arrest. There is also an executioner who lives on the premises.

## 3. GOVERNMENT COMMISSARIAT

**Where is it:** Phillip St, Sydney.

**What is it:** A wooden warehouse with an attached office, both of which have seen better days. This is its temporary establishment. An official building is not constructed until 1809 then torn down and replaced by Macquarie in 1812.

**What happens there:** Warehouse that holds much of the government's stores, including acting as a granary and keeping impounded goods. It is also the office of the Commissary, a critical role in the Colony where so much depends on the distribution of government stores, combining the roles of public accountant and provisioner of goods.

Possible characters associated with the location:

**Commissary, John Palmer:** For the entire period covered by this setting the colony's Commissary (controller of government goods) is John Palmer, whose nickname is "Little Jack." Palmer is very charismatic and well-liked in the colony. He has a 100-acre property at Garden Island Cove where he likes to entertain in style. He has another farm, George Farm, in Surry Hills of 70 acres. Palmer was purser on the *HMS Sirius* under the first Governor Arthur Philip on the First Fleet.

## 4. CHAPLAINS' OFFICE

**Where is it:** Phillip St, Sydney.

**What is it:** A wooden office which has seen better days, directly adjacent to the Commissariat.

**What happens there:** This small office is set aside for the colony's chaplains – the religious officials who hold Divine services at churches in Sydney and Parramatta and also attempt to convert the Aboriginal population to Christianity. It is notionally overseen by Samuel Marsden, although he is frequently absent from Sydney.

Characters associated with the location:

**Samuel Marsden:** Born in 1765, Marsden has served as full-time chaplain in the colonies since his arrival in 1794. Although a pious man, long years of ministering to convicts disinterested in salvation and NSW Corps soldiers corrupted by vice have made him cynical and hard. As well as overseeing the colony's religious services (both in Sydney and in Parramatta) he also serves as a clerical justice – a magistrate responsible for running court inquiries and trials. It is in the undertaking of this latter duty that Marsden has achieved most notoriety, largely because of the extreme severity of punishment and investigatory techniques he authorised. Most famously in 1800 as part of an inquiry into Irish plans for rebellion, Marsden ordered a suspect flogged mercilessly in the hope that he may reveal evidence about hidden weapons. Marsden has a strained relationship with the Governor of the colony, and is also no friend of John Macarthur.

## 5. MAGISTRATES' OFFICE

**Where is it:** Phillip St, Sydney.

**What is it:** A large wooden office which has seen better days, directly adjacent to the Commissariat.

**What happens there:** This large and busy premises is devoted to the colony's various Magistrates – those who collectively administer the legal system. Because the colony has no Parliament to speak of, the only way in which disputes and conflicts can be resolved is in the courts. This has made New South Wales a highly-litigious society, which in turn creates work for the numerous Magistrates most of whom have very little legal training but have attained the position due to significant land holdings or influence.





Characters associated with the location:

**Judge Advocate Richard Atkins:** Atkins is the senior legal figure in the Colony and is someone who has used his family connections back in England as a way to maintain a reputable place in Sydney society, despite the fact that he has come to New South Wales to flee creditors back home. He maintained his status despite being in debt to many (including Macarthur), alcoholic and addicted to immorality and dissolution. According to the Australian Dictionary of Biography (available online) while sober he could be an impressive figure, but he was also “ignorant and merciless, an inveterate debauchee.” Surgeon John Harris described his living arrangements as “worse than a Dog's in a squalid dwelling described as 'a perfect pigstye.’”

- *Other lawyers:* from 1801 this number includes former convict George Crossley.

**George Crossley:** A London attorney sentenced to transportation for perjury. His wife Anna Maria is the sister of Nicholas Divine, superintendent of convicts and later supporter of Bligh. Crossley gained a conditional pardon from Governor King in 1801. He and his wife have a farm on the Hawkesbury, but he also practises law, although is not allowed to plead in court. Crossley is a legal advisor to Judge Advocate Atkins.

## 6. NSW CORPS BARRACKS & PARADE

**Where is it:** George St.

**What is it:** Standing where modern-day Wynyard Station now stands, the George Street Barracks has a Parade Ground and Officers' Barracks. It occupies 15 acres in the centre of the town. Buildings have developed around it, including pubs and eating houses (one of which is The Black Swan, see page 43). The wives and families of the soldiers live just behind the Barracks in Clarence Street. Like most buildings the Barracks sorely needs some maintenance.

**What happens there:** The main barracks of the NSW Corps. Many soldiers also live here, while some have their own private accommodation around town.

Keepers may decide that under some circumstances it is appropriate for investigators to petition for sol-

## Depicting the Colony

By modern standards, the land occupied by the first colonists in New South Wales would be seen as idyllic, pleasant and lush. However that is not how the settlers and convicts perceive it: instead what they see is a strange place filled with unfamiliar animals and trees, and which might harbour any number of unknown threats. Because this kind of darker view serves the creation of a horrific setting we urge Keepers to take the lead from early accounts and portray the landscape of early New South Wales as dark, primal, eerie and uncertain.

Some atmospheric themes that could help in that depiction:

- The Colony is a nasty place, a giant prison run by military gaolers. Convicts are sent here to be punished for crimes in England and Ireland and are forced to work from sunup to sunset. Floggings and beatings are regular, usually administered by trustee convicts. Weaker convicts, male and female, are exploited by the stronger. The realities of life are harsh. Alcohol is one of the few escapes from the tedium and brutality of everyday life and is widely used.
- The era covered by this setting pre-dates any serious efforts at building the colony into something more substantial. It is striking how little of civilized society is actually in place: there are no banks, no police, no hospitals other than some buildings and tents allocated the role, and no insane asylums. There are magistrates and jailers, criminals and lots of rum.
- The British cleave to their European customs, including dressing in heavy garments, even to go to bed. They eat rich, heavy foods. The Aboriginal peoples know much better than this, but are looked on as savages or wild children, so no-one takes their advice. The bushcraft of indigenous Australians is also ignored, so white settlers or convicts lost in the wilderness often starve to death surrounded by native foods.

diers to be allocated to assist in their endeavours. In general this will require a **Hard Credit Rating** roll unless the investigator making the request is a NSW Corps officer – for such a character all that is required is a successful **Intimidation** roll and a select group of men will dutifully fall into line.



Possible characters associated with the location:

- Commander of the NSW Corps: for most of the period covered by this setting this office was held by Major George Johnston whose fate is tied closely with the Rum Rebellion (which will see him installed as the puppet administrator of the illegal military government).

**George Johnston:** Born in 1764, Johnston was an officer in the marines and served in wars against the Americans in 1777-8 and the French in 1781. Johnston sailed to NSW as a marine in the First Fleet, and when the marines were dismissed was selected by Governor Arthur Philip to raise a new body of men, the NSW Corps. He led the action against Irish rebel convicts in 1804, putting down the rebellion before it could turn ugly. Johnston is a handsome and popular officer and very mindful of the reputation of the NSW Corps. His common-law wife Esther Julian was a convict on the First Fleet and they have 3 sons and 4 daughters. Johnston is a strong supporter of Macarthur and resents the way that the Naval officers who have served as Governors (in particular Bligh) have insulted the Corps and interfered in military matters.

- Any other officers of the NSW Corps stationed in Sydney are likely to be found here at least occasionally.

## 7. ST PHILLIP'S CHURCH (AND TEMPORARY REPLACEMENT)

**Where is it:** On Church Street, mid-way between the soldier's parade and the gaol.

**What is it:** Between 1793 and 1798, a wooden building with thatched roof and earthen floor stood on this site; after this was burned down (allegedly by disgruntled convicts). Church services were



relocated to a neighbouring Government bonded storehouse, hastily repurposed. Work on a permanent replacement church, St. Phillips, began in 1800 but its doors did not open until 1809.

**What happens there:** Church services are held every Sunday; notionally these are mandatory for all soldiers and convicts (food rations can be docked for non-attendance) this particular Governor's Order is almost never enforced.

## 8. FEMALE ORPHAN SCHOOL

**Where is it:** On the corner of George Street and Bridge Street

**What is it:** A school set up in 1801 to look after young destitute girls between the ages of 7 and 14 (some orphaned, some abandoned). About 30–40 girls are residents at any time, and their day-to-day welfare and education is overseen by a resident Matron (and her husband, the Master). Education mostly consists of learning to sew or spin, and in some cases learning to read. Some cynically suggest that it is little more than a small-scale clothing factory and training ground for future domestic servants.

**What happens there:** Most of the time this building is used for teaching, but occasionally it is used as a convenient place to hold larger Church services. Whenever large legal trials occur in the colony, it is common for the school to be temporarily used as a *de facto* court house. Notably, this location will be used for the trial of John Macarthur and also the “kangaroo courts” convened following the Rum Rebellion.

**Mrs Elizabeth More Hume:** Daughter of a clergyman, Elizabeth came out from England with her brother in 1795 both intent on becoming free settlers of the colony of New South Wales. Shortly after her arrival she met and married Andrew Hamilton Hume, a superintendent of convicts and farmer. The two moved briefly to Parramatta when Andrew was made government store-keeper there, but after a short time that appointment was reversed and Andrew was in court on charges of “administrative irregularities”. Although acquitted of this charge it was to be the first of several scandals. Elizabeth's decision to take up the Matron position at the newly-founded school was an effort to stabilise the pair's fortunes but it has not succeeded – instead, her husband's “worthless character” has tarnished people's faith in her abilities as a senior school mistress.



## 9. PAYMASTER'S GENERAL STORE

**Where is it:** Corner of Bridge and George Streets

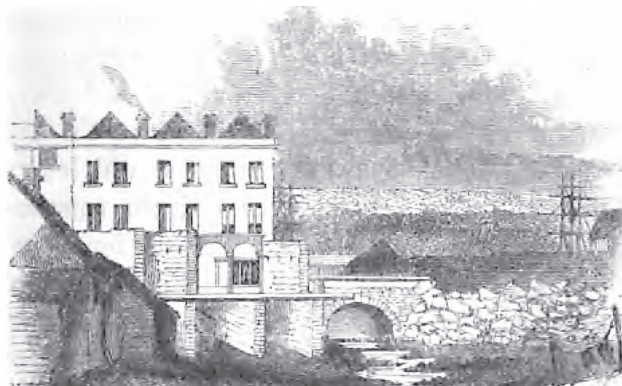
**What is it:** This is the privately-run retail store of the NSW Corps Paymaster. For the second half of the *Convicts & Cthulhu* era Anthony Fenn Kemp held the office of paymaster. Before him, John Macarthur performed the job (and oversaw running of the store in much the same fashion as summarised below).

**What happens there:** Kemp sells all manner of goods but as Paymaster also dispenses the pay to NSW Corps soldiers. Kemp's stated preference is that soldiers take their pay in his goods. He asks "What will you have? Tea at 10 shillings a pound?" If someone holds out for money Kemp damns them as mutinous rogues and threatens to have them flogged for impertinence. The shop enjoys profits of around 100%.

**Captain Anthony Fenn Kemp.** Soldier, magistrate, merchant and grazier: Kemp was born in Aldgate in London. His wife is Elizabeth Riley and they have several children (eventually they will have 18). Kemp's bullying of soldiers under his command for profit is notorious in Sydney. Kemp serves a brief posting in Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania), effectively administering it from 1806–7. A Freemason, Kemp is a member of Australia's first lodge since 1802. He is a Macarthur stalwart and will take a central part in the Rebellion.

## 10. THE TANKS AND THE TANK STREAM

**Where is it:** The stream runs North-South through central Sydney to flow out into Sydney Cove; the Tanks are midway between the NSW Corps Barracks and Government House



**What is it:** The Tank Stream is a natural waterway which flows with fresh water. The Tanks are large stone cut reservoirs which hold water from the stream. The Tank Stream is crossed by a bridge—the only stone bridge in the colony—that is universally regarded as an appallingly-built structure.

**What happens there:** People come to the Tanks daily to get fresh water. Its water is important to the township and also to replenishing ships in the Harbour. The quality of the water in the stream (and hence the tanks) varies significantly as some industries (in particularly tanneries) upstream have begun to use it to dispose of waste.

- **Simeon Lord's home and warehouse:** Simeon Lord is one of Sydney's most prosperous emancipist merchants. His three storey home and warehouse sits by the Tank Stream Bridge. Ship's officers sometimes stay here when they wish to stay near their merchandise.

## 11. SYDNEY COVE WHARFS & WAREHOUSES

**Where is it:** Sydney Cove adjacent to The Rocks.

**What is it:** A sprawl of locations: The harbour itself and the ships on it; the Government wharf; private warehouses; shipyard; some pubs.

**What happens there:** The harbour is the centre of commerce and travel in the colony. Some notable locations within it are:

- **James Underwood's Shipyard:** James Underwood is an emancipist shipbuilder and ship owner. His shipyard is the biggest in Sydney. Underwood is in partnership with Henry Kable, another emancipist merchant and together they own the sloop *Diana*.
- **Ships in the Harbour:** At any time there are usually a handful of larger government ships, perhaps one or two trade vessels and a dozen or so fishing boats. There is also a regular ferry service that runs daily between Sydney and Parramatta utilizing boats and barges—the trip takes about 4 hours. Ships also leave irregularly for more far-flung places (including the secondary convict settlements at Coal River and Norfolk Island, as well as the only other settlement in Australia—the penal colony at Van Diemen's Land, far to the south).



For an example of a representative warehouse in this district, see below.

Possible characters associated with the location:

A large and diverse group of people use the area around the wharves and warehouses on a daily basis. The following are some representative examples from which the Keeper can extrapolate as needed:

**Thomas Moore**, sailor, master shipbuilder, landowner: Moore will be one of 833 persons who signed the 'Settlers' Address to Governor William Bligh just before he is deposed by John Macarthur and Major George Johnston in January 1808. He became a captain in the Loyal Sydney Volunteer militia in March 1808.

**James Underwood & Henry Kable**, ex-convicts, businessmen, landholders: This pair of business partners owns several of the ships that make regular voyages to Coal River and the second penal colony at Van Diemen's Land. Like most businessmen they dislike the way the colony has been governed, believing the office of Governor to often behave in a fraudulent way.

**Mary Wade, ex-convict**: Mary was a former street sweeper sentenced to death in England at age 11 for stealing from another child. She was pardoned to celebrate the curing of King George's madness and transported for life. She survived internment on Norfolk Island and has relocated to Sydney with her two children. Her emancipated Irish convict lover Teague Harrigan is away on a whaling expedition. Mary is 30 now and currently lives in a tent near the Tank Stream.

- **Dock patrol**: The docks are a source of potential theft and trouble. Constables and NSW Corpsmen patrol here in pairs by night. There is a 50% chance some fracas will draw their attention.

## 12. THE ROCKS

**Where is it**: Along the western shore line of Sydney Cove.

**What is it**: A disreputable slum area, comprising a jumble of ramshackle buildings constructed from wood, daub and local sandstone (which gives the region its name).

What happens there: Ex-convicts live here (usually in squalor); sailors visit for drunker carousing and availing themselves of prostitutes.

## 13. DAWES POINT

**Where is it**: The hilly land immediately to the west of The Rocks, northwards to Port Jackson Bay.

**What is it**: A headland with sparse settled areas overlooking the Harbour. Notable features are the Hospital, the Gun Battery, a windmill, and Robert Campbell's wharf and warehouse.

What happens there:

- **Sydney Hospital**: This prefabricated wood and copper building replaced the tents that served as the hospital up until 1790. The building can house up to 80 patients and is mainly for the use of the military and to patch up prisoners. Contemporary accounts describe it as being in "a ruinous state". It also has barracks for the use of the Surgeon and assistant surgeons.
- **Sydney Observatory**: a small timber and shingle cottage. In an era before reliable chronometers existed, there is a strong link between astronomy and navigation. The modest collection of telescopes and sextants are important tools for establishing longitude relative to Greenwich; the observatory also collects meteorological data.
- **Dawes Battery & Powder Magazine**: A gun emplacement at the very tip of the headland overlooking Port Jackson Bay. The 26-pound guns from the *HMS Sirius* were placed here by Governor Phillip. There is a guard house and powder magazine here, both in need of repair. For more on this location, see the scenario "Un-fresh Off The Boat" on page 63.
- **Windmill Hill**: prior to 1803, the highest point of the headland housed a large government windmill; this was demolished to make way for a planned hexagonal citadel-style stone fort to be called Fort Phillip. Construction of the fort commenced in 1804 but proceeds slowly (the idea is eventually abandoned in 1807). A large defensive ditch has been dug, some parts of the stone walls constructed, and a few guns placed in the unfinished fort, looking out over the harbour.





- **Robert Campbell's Warehouse and Wharf:** Campbell has a private wharf and a warehouse as part of his business concerns, Campbell & Co.

Possible characters associated with these locations:

**Thomas Jamison, Chief Surgeon:** Middle-aged Irishman Thomas Jamison is the Colony's chief Surgeon. He was surgeon's mate on the *HMS Sirius* under Phillip. Along with John Harris and John Savage he conducted the Colony's first successful vaccination of children against smallpox and published the Colony's first medical paper. He is also a merchant and ally of Macarthur. Not long after Bligh's appointment as Governor, Jamison has a major falling-out with Bligh over the refusal of a request to return to England.

**John Harris, NSW Corps Surgeon:** Irishman John Harris is the official surgeon for the NSW Corps. During the time of the "Rum Economy" under Governor King he is a stalwart supporter of the government. However, soon after coming to power Bligh dismisses him from his official positions as Naval Officer and Magistrate, sharply turning his allegiances to those voicing uprising. Around the time of the Rum Rebellion, John Harris's house in Ultimo is one of the primary meeting places used by rebels to secretly hatch their plot.

**Robert Campbell, Naval Officer:** The colony's Naval Officer looks after imports and exports. Until 1807 that office was held by John Harris (above), but Bligh appoints his own man, Robert Campbell, instead. A free settler, Campbell came from Scotland to the colony in 1797 and has established himself as a merchant with a reputation for fair trading, offering generous credit and low prices. He supports Bligh whom he believes is trying to make for a fairer colony and support the poor. He is also a supporter of the London Missionary Society and through them underwrites various charitable works.

## 14. AN EXAMPLE WAREHOUSE: *Jeremiah Stone's*

An investigation which centres around goods or item shipped to the colony may well include clues pointing to a warehouse location close to the harbour. Jeremiah Stone's warehouse is provided here as a representative example of such a place. The Keeper can either use it as-is or tweak the description to create any number of similar places.

**Where is it:** The Rocks, near the Quay.

**What is it:** This is a two storey wooden warehouse with a small office at the top and a narrow loft.

**What happens there:** Jeremiah Stone lets out warehouse spaces to other merchants who may need it. He asks no questions and his rates offer less monopolistic gouging than many other local traders, so his business is well patronized.

Possible characters associated with the location:

**Jeremiah Stone, amoral warehouse owner:** Stone is a thin, withdrawn man of 41 with long, lank preternaturally grey hair. Although he does regular business with a number of shady types (potentially including Mythos cultists, at the Keeper's discretion), he himself has no interest in their causes or beliefs just their money. He is prone to taking part in some of the secret rum-fuelled and ribald partying that takes place from time to time. Conceivably he might be enticed to rent out part of his warehouse for such degenerate events, if the price is right.

## 15. AN EXAMPLE PUBLIC HOUSE: *The Black Swan*

Most scenarios in Sydney will feature character paying some kind of visit to a drinking establishment – Simeon Lord's notorious public bar, "The Black Swan", is provided as an example.

**Where is it:** George Street

**What is it:** The Black Swan is the first business Simeon Lord went into following his emancipation. It is a modest main building with some wooden out-buildings. It stands alongside John Halfpenny's shop.

**What happens there:** Drinking, socializing, gossiping. Late in the *Convicts & Cthulhu* era it becomes a central meeting place for those plotting against the Governor.



Possible characters associated with the location:

**Simeon Lord**, Emancipist Trader and owner of the Swan: Born in 1771, Lord was transported for 7 years for stealing cloth. He was emancipated early and become a merchant, auctioneer and agent for captains of vessels wishing to sell their goods. He is very prosperous and a model of what emancipated convicts could achieve. Lord has a wide variety of mercantile interests and many partners. He is a strong supporter of the Rebels and has clashed with Bligh a number of times over merchant matters.

## ABORIGINAL SETTLEMENTS IN AND AROUND SYDNEY TOWN

**Where is it:** It is only a quirk of European-style historical record-keeping that early Sydney is customarily viewed as an exclusively white township. Large groups of aboriginal people live in unsettled areas close to Sydney Town, at all points of the compass, including Kirribilli on the north shore, and west of The Rocks.

**What happens there:** The Aboriginal people live in relative harmony with the white people, although find them incomprehensible at times. There are sporadic outbursts of violence on both sides, but more in the outer lying areas such as Parramatta and the Hawkesbury River than in the Sydney region. Otherwise the Aboriginal people pursue their traditional lifestyles.

Possible characters associated with the location:

**Bungaree**, mediator between Aboriginals and colonial government: Bungaree is a noted Sydney character and a famous historical figure. He has been a mediator between the white and Aboriginal peoples of Sydney since 1804. He travelled with explorer Matthew Flinders on the first circumnavigation of the Australian continent in 1802, and was an enormous help dealing with the native peoples encountered on Flinders' voyages. He is good natured and very shrewd. Bungaree dresses in a highly irregular way, wearing a Navy officer's hat and a NSW Corps sergeant's tunic, linen trousers and bare feet. He doesn't seem bothered by the heat (unlike the Europeans who wear this garb). He is friendly and very polite and subtly mocking. If encouraged he can do a very funny impersonation of the walk of any of the Governors of NSW, including Bligh, which is a bandy legged rocking gait.

## Places in Parramatta

Aside from Sydney, Parramatta is the only significant town in the colony of New South Wales. It was founded not long after the first convict ships arrived. While Parramatta plays a small role as a place of punishment its main functions are as a regional barracks for troops at the western-most end of the Port Jackson waterway and as a more pleasant place for free settlers to live and farm.

## GETTING TO PARRAMATTA

Parramatta is around 4 to 5 hours from Sydney. Investigators can ride a horse or go by carriage along the unpaved but well-maintained road or hire transport along the Parramatta River. Merchant river boats and barges are available as is a ferry, crewed by convict labour. All transport must be privately arranged.

## KISSING POINT

Located about half-way along the road between Sydney and Parramatta on the north side of the harbour, this sparsely settled area (modern-day Ryde) is famous for housing the tavern of James Squire, ex-convict and the colony's foremost brewer.

**James Squire**, ex-convict and emancipist brewer: Born in England sometime around 1755, Squire was among the first batch of convicts transported to New South Wales, after having been convicted of highway robbery in Surrey in 1785. His sentence was transportation for seven years; after serving out this term he elected to remain in the colony and became the earliest local brewer, initially using English malt as the basis for his beer. Although his small business began in Sydney (privately brewing for the interim NSW Corps Governors) he was granted land in 1795 at Kissing Point where he began growing hops and raising livestock. There he has set up a larger brewery and tavern, the latter serving as a popular stop on the trip between the two settlements. Squire is known as a fair and community-minded individual who likes to stand up for the interests of the poor; he is also friend to the local Aboriginal population and a personal friend to one of the most famous Aboriginal leaders of the era, Bennelong (see below).





**Bennelong** was originally an indigenous clan leader of the Wangal people on the south side of the Parramatta River. In 1789 the first Governor of the New South Wales colony, Arthur Phillip, ordered that one of the Aboriginal people be captured and brought to Sydney to act as a mediator between the indigenous people and the colonists. Bennelong wasn't the first captured for this purpose, but was the first that survived long enough to learn English and be of use to the Governor. Although taken from his people against his will, Bennelong formed a friendship with the Governor apparently realising the political importance to his people of having some kind of "diplomatic" channels to the leaders of the white settlement. When Governor Phillip was forced to return to England in 1792 due to ill health he asked Bennelong to accompany him.

Bennelong stayed in England for three years, and was paraded around to meet many notable politicians of the day. After falling ill he was returned to Australia in 1795 on the *HMS Reliance*, arriving back in his homeland on September 7<sup>th</sup>. On his return Bennelong acted for a time as an advisor to the new Governor (King) before ultimately choosing his traditional culture over remaining with the Europeans. At sometime around 1797, Bennelong returns to the lands around Parramatta and takes up a leadership role with a different clan. He lives on lands owned by James Squire.

## PARRAMATTA TOWNSHIP

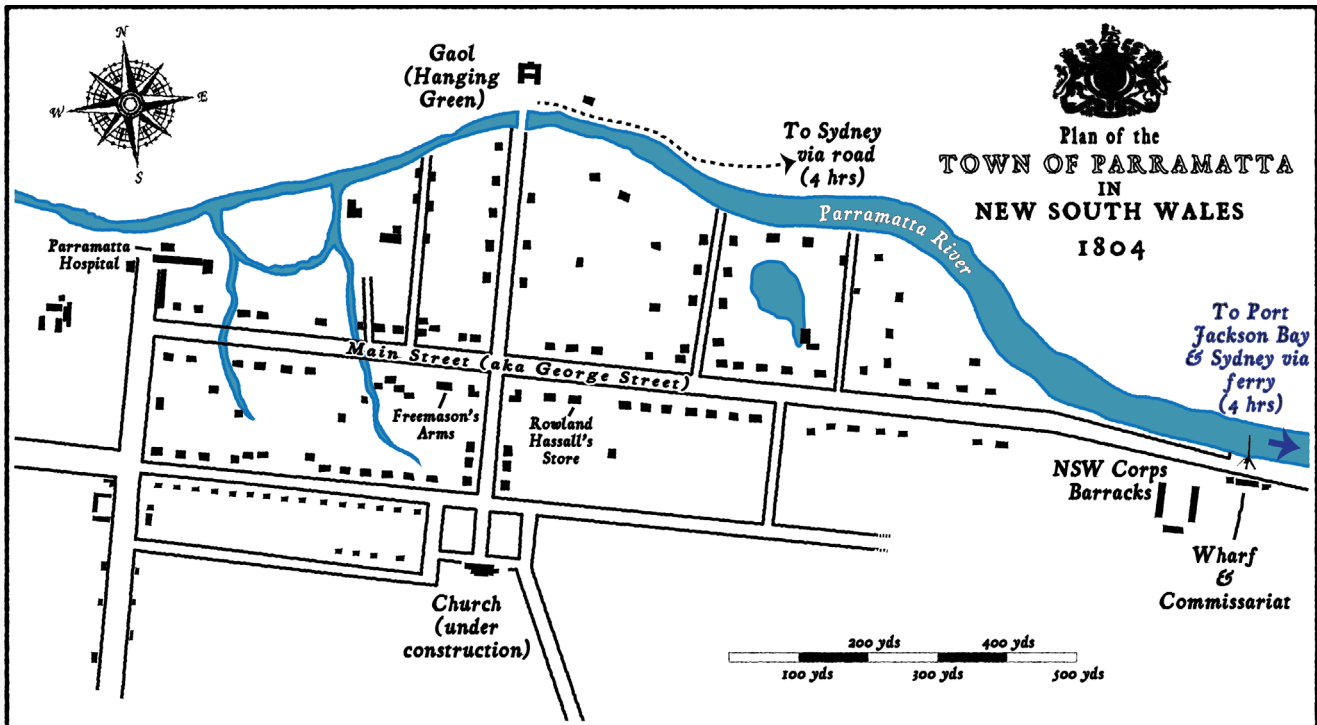
**Where is it:** On the banks of the Parramatta River which flows into the far western end Port Jackson Bay (the enormous inlet which includes Sydney Harbour and numerous other bays).

**What is it:** Parramatta was the first settlement established after Sydney. It is a regional centre for many free settler farms dotted around the nearby countryside, as well as being a base for a garrison of NSW Corps soldiers.

**What happens there:** Parramatta township is right on the river on a wide plain with an intersecting grand main street. It boasts around 180 buildings and a population of 1500. Nearly all are farmers. Some other buildings:

- It has a small hospital where Mr D'arcy Wentworth is in residence; he has an excellent reputation as a doctor.
- A large army barracks (see page 47).
- Its main church is still being built.
- There are several public houses, the most prosperous being the Freemason's Arms (see page 47).





- Ex-missionary Rowland Hassall has a goods store here where he sells, among other things, cloth from the South Seas.
- Parramatta Commissariat. The Government store is the equivalent of the Sydney commissariat.
- On the far side of the river stands the local convict gaol, sometimes called the Hanging Green (see below).

## I. PRISON AT HANGING GREEN

**Where is it:** On the other side of the Parramatta River from the main township

**What is it:** This is the local gaol for the detention of convicts, both male and female. There are a sizeable number of female convicts here. Many of the local farms employ female domestic servants drawn from the prisoner population, and those that do not reside with their free settler masters live here. In 1804 the prison superintendent embarks upon an experiment to create a Female Factory – a workshop on the upper floor of the prison where female convicts are put to work operating weaving machines. This involves installation of machines and the employment of a master weaver; unfortunately despite being a success the first Parramatta Female Factory is ultimately abandoned a few years later when the prison building is badly burned in a fire lit by convicts.

**What happens there:** Convicts sleep here, as well as being flogged and (in some cases) executed by the hangman. Between 1804 and late 1807 the Female Factory produces the colony's first locally-made fabric, some of which is exported back to England.

Possible characters associated with the location:

**George Mealmaker, Master Weaver:** A Scotsman from a humble background but well trained in the operation of a hand-loom from days spent watching his father's weaving works in Dundee. Mealmaker had a radical streak, being part of groups created to uphold the ideals of the French Revolution. These beliefs, and his outspoken attempts to publish them, brought him into conflict with the British Government, and he was ultimately tried for sedition and "administering unlawful oaths". He was transported to New South Wales in 1800 where his skills as a weaver attracted the interests of Governor King who was interested in establishing a convict-run weaving shop. Thus he came to be appointed to oversee the first Female Factory and obtain a conditional pardon. Unfortunately the arrival of Bligh (who had little interest in the weaving shop) and the tragic destruction of the Female Factory by fire in 1807, leave Mealmaker a crushed man. He dies in 1808, destitute and drunk.



**“Prince” Phillip Cunningham**, convict and rebel: A notable figure among the rabble of Irish convicts involved in the Castle Hill uprising in 1804. Phillip Cunningham is an intelligent and charismatic man whose incarceration was more to do with his revolutionary politics than anything else. A stonemason and publican by trade, Cunningham became involved in the United Irish network in the 1790s and helped to organise an insurgency in the Clonmel district in 1798. This led to further revolutionary activities. Eventually he was captured and given a death sentence but this was later commuted to transportation to New South Wales for life. Even while travelling to Australia by ship in 1800, Phillip Cunningham was involved in an abortive uprising attempt and this flair for rebellion continued after his arrival at the colony. Briefly sent to Norfolk Island as punishment for his part in the ship-board mutiny, Cunningham was promptly returned since skilled stonemasons are in short supply in the newly-settled areas. Assigned to the Castle Hill area, Cunningham has been appointed overseer of the local government stonemasons. His scheming and plotting come to a head in 1804 when he incites the mob which went on to become the Castle Hill rebellion. He dies as part of that mutiny.

**Molly Rowson**, convict and part-time Cook for the Macarthurs: Molly is a feisty red-haired Irish girl in her late twenties, convicted of prostitution in England and transported to the colonies for 14 years. Because of her prior experience in domestic service she has been assigned to be one of the cooks at Elizabeth Farm, John Macarthur’s estate (although she still returns to the Gaol every night). For fourteen months leading up to the Castle Hill convict rebellion in 1804 she is the sweetheart of Phillip Cunningham. After the failed uprising, she makes every effort to distance herself from this dubious association, but she still remembers several unusual tales told by Cunningham.

## 2. PARRAMATTA BARRACKS

**Where is it:** Off Main Street near the town wharf.

**What is it:** A single storey barracks made of bricks bound with mud for the Parramatta Headquarters of the NSW Corps.

**What happens there:** Drilling, soldiering.

Possible characters associated with the location:

- There are dozens of soldiers – including numerous officers – stationed here under the command of Captain Slough. The Keeper can improvise as needed, using the example below as a template:

**Sgt Dogwood**, Mailman: Overweight and in his mid-40s, Dogwood is seen by most as being quite useless as a soldier. However he serves one function well – delivering mail between Parramatta and Sydney. Riding a swayback nag of a horse, he makes the trip daily, leaving Parramatta Barracks at dawn (or whenever he wakes) and arriving in Sydney town by lunch time. He delivers the mail bag to the Sydney Barracks and swaps it for the bag bearing messages bound for Parramatta. While this is an extremely tedious and repetitive job, Dogwood has exactly the right personality for it.

## 3. FREEMASON’S ARMS, PUBLIC HOUSE

**Where is it:** Off Main Street in the central township.

**What is it:** The pub premises includes a well-stocked store which sells feed and grain to the Government.

**What happens there:** Drinking, selling, gossiping.

Possible characters associated with the location:

**James Larra**, emancipist publican: A Spanish-Jewish emancipist and merchant in his mid-50s, Larra is the owner of the Freemason’s Arms. Larra was granted a pardon and built the Freemason’s Arms in 1800. In 1797 under conditional pardon he acted as an agent for John Macarthur in the rum trade. Larra is also a Sergeant Major in the Loyal Parramatta Association of Volunteers, a local militia of whom he was a founder member. Larra has a reputation for honesty and square dealing.

**Francis Oakes**, Chief Constable of Parramatta: An unremarkable man in his 30s, Oakes is a shoemaker by trade who came to the colony as a missionary in 1798. He is appointed Chief Constable of Parramatta in 1805. His fellow missionaries have a less than stellar opinion of him, calling him “a bold, rough creature”.



## 4. ELIZABETH FARM (MACARTHUR'S LANDHOLDING)

**Where is it:** Rose Hill, west of Parramatta, backing onto the river.

**What is it:** A large estate of farm and grazing land with a central single-storey brick building comprising house, servants' apartments and some offices. The house is surrounded by a vineyard and fruit trees.

**What happens there:** Household work, education of children, farming, and grazing. Towards the end of the *Convicts & Cthulhu* era John Macarthur also uses his Parramatta home as the scene of much of his plotting against Bligh.

Possible characters associated with the location:

**Elizabeth Macarthur**, John Macarthur's wife: Elizabeth Macarthur arrived in the Colony in 1790, two years after its foundation and her marriage to John Macarthur. She has numerous small children (her eighth and last is born in 1808). In her 40s, she is a woman of education and sensitivity and runs the household with great attention to order and the proprieties of life. She is fond of Parramatta, but regrets the limited educational possibilities for her children. Her kindness to the convicts at Elizabeth Farm is well known. She enjoys social occasions and is charming and witty. In 1809 she takes over the running of this farm and Camden Park in the absence of her husband with considerable success at a crucial time in the family's wool-growing enterprise.

**Tedbury**, Aboriginal warrior and son of the famous former leader Pemulwuy: Tedbury is an ally of John Macarthur's and an occasional visitor to Elizabeth Farm. He is the son of Pemulwuy (see page 50), a famous aboriginal fighter who waged war against the settlers when they first appeared. Tedbury considers Macarthur a good friend, and when the dispute between Macarthur and Bligh is in full swing might be found carrying a bunch of spears with which he says he intends to spear the Governor. In fact, shortly before the Rum Rebellion, Tedbury does indeed travel to Sydney with the intention of doing harm to the Governor, although by the time he arrives Bligh is already imprisoned.

## 5. VINEGAR HILL (AKA CASTLE HILL)

"Vinegar Hill" is the local nickname of Castle Hill, the site of a battle between the soldiers of the NSW Corps and Irish convicts on March 5, 1804. Castle Hill has been developed as farming land since 1801 under Governor King. For scenarios set early in the *Convicts & Cthulhu* time-period, this place is simply an unremarkable hill – part of the granted landholdings for an eccentric French Baron. The Keeper could conceivably set a scenario in and around the large-scale uprising in 1804 (which was significant enough that the entire colony was placed under martial law for a few days for fear of it spreading). Some brief internet research (perhaps beginning with the Wikipedia page for "Castle Hill convict revolution") will provide enough details to do so. Alternatively, scenarios set later in the era can readily make use of this momentous event as a piece of recent history, or the motivation for a character or Mythos entity's actions. See "The Ghosts of Vinegar Hill" plot seed on page 76 for an example of one such tale.

Note that the appellation "Vinegar Hill" only exists for this place after the convict uprising – in fact it is a reference back to a similar "Battle of Vinegar Hill" that took place in Ireland in 1798. Many of the Irish survivors of that battle were made political prisoners and transported to New South Wales as punishment for fighting for Irish independence. Some of those men also fought in the second (Australian) "Battle of Vinegar Hill."

**Where is it:** Castle Hill is about 19 miles northwest of Sydney and about 7 miles due north of Parramatta

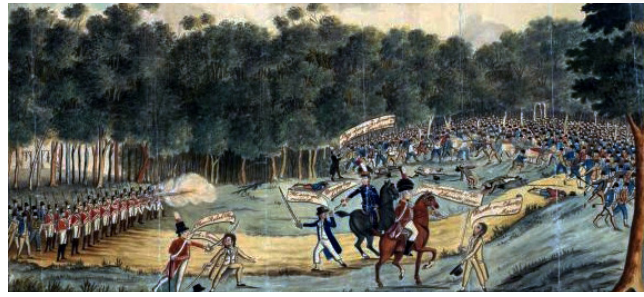
**What is it:** After 1801 Castle Hill is a large hill with a few scattered buildings, including a modest convict barracks, a Government Farm mainly growing wheat. The first free settler in this region was Frenchman Baron Verincourt de Clambe, in 1802. Later in the era more private farms spring up in the region. It is the limits of the settled areas – further out than this is untamed bush land. In 1810 the Government Farm is abandoned and turned into a lunatic asylum.

**What happens there:** Farming and flogging. In 1804 it is the site of the final defeat of the Irish convict uprising.



Possible characters associated with the location:

**Baron Verincourt de Clambe**, eccentric free settler: Coming to the New South Wales colony in 1801, this minor French noble was more properly trying to escape from the unrest following the French Revolution. Being granted 200 acres by Governor King he set up a farm where he tried growing grapes, cotton and coffee plants. His large homestead building – called the Hermitage – was sneeringly referred to be locals as “The Castle” thereby giving Castle Hill its name.



**Jenny Milgrim**, convict servant: Jenny was a prostitute convicted of stealing from a wealthy client in England and sentenced to 14 years transportation. She has arrived only recently but been taken under the wing by Mrs Cushing who believes it is her Christian duty to help the wayward girl. Jenny is a good worker but tends to be a little skittish and is very superstitious. She is afraid of the two convicts Dunkle and Smogg, assigned to the farm as labourers. The Cushings permit Jenny to sleep at the farm, since it allows her to better serve the family.

**Dunkle and Smogg**, assigned convicts: Filthy and foul-smelling, these two men are assigned convicts sent to provide manual labour on the farm. Dunkle is tall, rangy and filthy, with sparse hair and an imbecile grin. Smogg is small, taciturn and filthy, with a false ingratiating style. The two men are only at the farm during daylight hours – at night they are required back at the Parramatta Gaol.

## 6. A SAMPLE SMALL FARMSTEAD: THE CUSHING FARM

Scenarios in Parramatta may involve investigators looking into the activities of local free settlers – whether they be the perpetrators of Mythos horrors or their victim. While a few estates are truly opulent (like John Macarthur’s Elizabeth Farm described above), most are modest affairs. If the Keeper requires a smallish free settler farm for his or her game, this example – The Cushing Farm – should provide a suitable template from which to tailor an individual creation.

**Where is it:** One mile from the centre of Parramatta township.

**What is it:** A farm house made of wattle and daub, a barn and cultivated areas for crops. Some cattle and sheep are grazing by day or in the barn by night.

**What happens there:** Farming, homemaking, some gardening.

Possible characters associated with the location:

**Julius Cushing**, farmer: Cushing is a devoted husband but sufficiently distracted by the demands of running a farm in a colonial society that he has little time for distractions. He is a member of the Parramatta Loyal Association (the local voluntary militia) and has occasionally joined groups trying to track down plundering groups of Aborigines.

**Mrs Caroline Cushing**, farmer’s wife: Mrs Cushing is an attractive if tired-looking woman with black hair worn in a loose bun and grey eyes. She is friendly to investigators unless they are obvious bullies and sympathetic to convicts, especially those she believes to have a kind nature.

## 7. A SAMPLE LARGER FARMSTEAD: THE VERRIER FARM

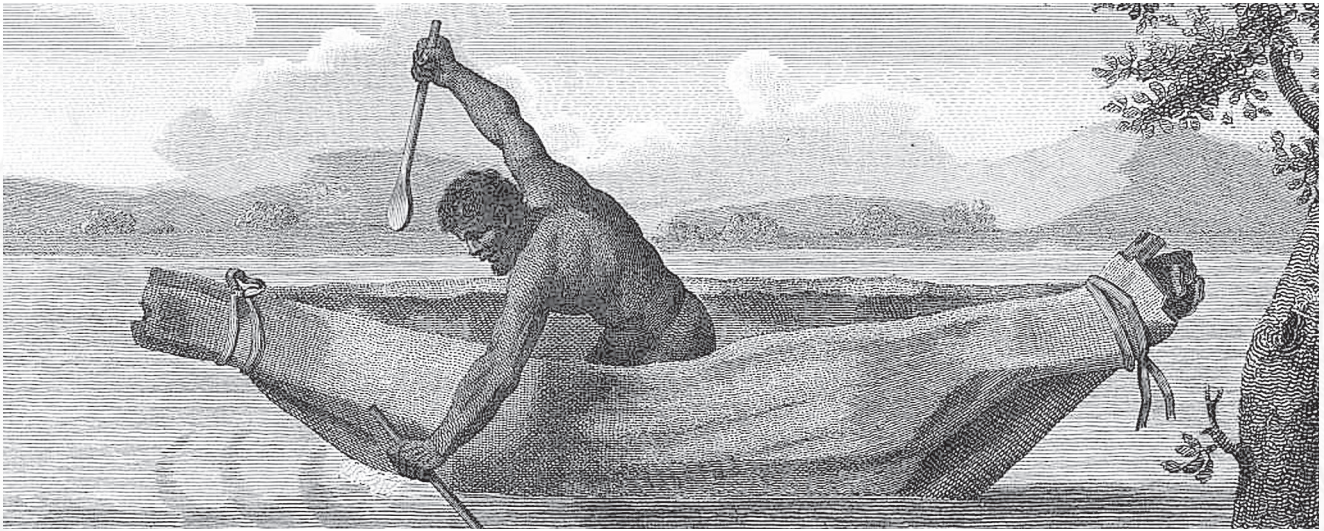
If the Keeper requires a more substantial and prosperous local farmstead for his or her game, this example – The Verrier Farm – provides a good template.

**Where is it:** Beyond Cushing’s farm, around an hour from Parramatta.

**What is it:** A wooden farmhouse and two wooden out-buildings. It sits on 300 acres granted to Verrier as a free settler.

**What happens there:** Farming, homemaking, some gardening. The main crop is maize and other grains. The out-buildings might be used to house other (perhaps illegal) forms of industry such as brewing or distillation of liquor. Alternatively they may just be store houses for bales of hay. Livestock numbers around 100 and includes pigs, goats, poultry and sheep with fewer cattle and horses.





Possible characters associated with the location:

**William Verrier**, farmer: Hearty and friendly, the free settler Verrier is well liked in Parramatta and is a particularly popular figure at the Freemason's Arms where he may be found on many evenings. Born in Cornwall, Verrier came to New South Wales to seek his future, some five years ago. Because he is one of the few unmarried men in the district – and also the owner of a sizeable farm – there is ample speculation Verrier he may soon take a wife and start a family. Certainly there are many daughters of local families that would be suitable candidates, although Verrier is notoriously shy and reticent whenever the subject comes up. Instead of a family he relies on convict labourers to run the household – at least for now.

- *Others:* Verrier lives alone but family members in such farms usually number 2-3 adults and 3-5 children. Verrier's farm has 5 assigned convict labourers, which is the standard amount allotted each settler.

## ABORIGINAL SETTLEMENTS NEAR PARRAMATTA

The Bidjigal are among the 'woods tribes' as the first settlers called them, Aboriginal people who had little friendly contact with the white people. They live by fishing in the river, hunting in the bushland for native animals and finding native foods such as bull-ants eggs. They use spears barbed with small sharp stones. Possums, kangaroos and emus are spirit ancestors to the Bidjigal. Harming them indiscriminately will bring swift retribution.

**Pemulwuy** is the most famous of the Bidjigal, renowned for being one of the few Aboriginal leaders that successfully fought the Europeans and survived long enough to be a nuisance. For scenarios set early in the *Convicts & Cthulhu* era, investigators are likely to hear frightened whispers in Parramatta recounting the daring armed raids Pemulwuy leads on settlers around the region. Most of the raids are actually for food, with the Aboriginals particularly stealing corn from farmsteads. A few are "payback" for atrocities that the settlers have inflicted upon local Aboriginals (such as kidnapping their children). Pemulwuy's campaign of plundering started in 1792, and despite considerable efforts by colonists to trap or kill him, the Aboriginal leader seemed to lead a charmed life – eluding soldiers and settlers alike. Eventually his invulnerability (at least in the minds of the local Aboriginal people) takes on a supernatural quality. People come to believe he simply cannot be killed. Eventually this is proven wrong when seaman and explorer Henry Hacking tracks down Pemulwuy in 1802 and shoots him to collect the price the government had placed upon him. As a statement, the Government of the day ordered that Pemulwuy's head should be cut off and returned to England pickled in spirits.

Later in the era, in the days leading up to the Rum Rebellion, Pemulwuy's son Tedbury splits his time between his ancestral lands and Macarthur's farm, waiting to spear the Governor (See Elizabeth Farm on page 48).



## The Coal River Settlement

**Important Note:** This location is only settled in 1801 – for scenarios set in earlier times, this region would be untouched wilderness.

Coal River (modern Newcastle) is a dire place of secondary punishment – a place where Sydney convicts (or those based elsewhere in the colony) could be sent if they broke the rules and needed punishment. It is located about 100 miles (160km) north of Sydney on the coast. After the Castle Hill Rebellion of 1804 this prison settlement is mostly made up of Irish convicts that had participated in that bloody uprising. The convicts at Coal River are sentenced to incredibly hard labour – digging coal in the harshest of conditions and in an environment where they were frequently brutalized by their guards.

The white population is around 40 male convicts, 15 female convicts and a handful of children with around 25 soldiers and overseers. The place is largely a work camp, with the only ships bringing supplies from Sydney and returning coal. There are no free settlers and no farming.

### GETTING TO COAL RIVER

A road to Coal River is not commenced until well after the period covered by this setting – currently the place is only reachable by ship. A supply ship with stores goes monthly, and a merchant ship might be inclined to take the investigators (especially if they ship some rum on the side). Alternately the investigators may be able to persuade a ship owner that they are on the Governor's business.

The voyage from Sydney Harbour to Coal River's heads takes 2 to 3 days depending on wind and weather.

Some ships that ply the Sydney to Coal River run are:

- The *Contest*, 45 tons, 6 crew. Owned by Kable & Co.
- The *Endeavor*, 31 tons, 6 crew. Owned by Kable & Co.
- The *Governor Hunter*, 33 tons, 6 crew. Owned by Isaac Nichols.
- The *Marcia*, 26 tons, 5 crew. Owned by Kable & Co.
- The *Venus*, 25 tons, 5 crew. Owned by John Macarthur.
- The *Resource*, 25 tons, 5 crew. Owned by Redmund & Cullen.
- The *Richmond*, 18 tons, 3 crew. Owned by Morley & Watkins.
- The *William & Mary*, 12 tons, 3 crew. Owned by William Miller.

Entering the harbour at Coal River is rather dangerous in this era due to a number of navigational hazards. The approach is made even more hair-raising during poor weather. Keepers should determine if the weather is mild, in which case the entrance to the Coal River harbour is worrisome for the untrained investigators but not actually dangerous. If they are making the trip during a storm the Keeper might ask one player to make a Luck roll on behalf of the captain: failure means the ship founders and they must wait to be rescued in a long boat and dragged onto the beach.

### WHARVES AND BEACH

**Where is it:** This is where ships from Sydney arrive; the coal mine is also directly adjacent to the beach and wharves.

**What is it:** A number of key locations are clustered close together:

- **Coal Island** – a tall rock outcropping whose height and situation is key to the navigational hazards for ships. (Later it is known as Nobby's island, later still Nobby's Point when it is joined to the mainland).
- **Signal Head** – a coal-burning beacon overlooking the entrance to the river has been set up on Coal Island.
- **The Coal Mine** – The coal seam has been exposed at the sea shore.
- **Stone Wharf** – This is the main wharf of 180 foot length. A guard is placed here to stop sailors from visiting ships fraternizing with convicts. (This hasn't helped, as venereal disease is rampant at Coal River settlement).

**What happens there:** The wharves are busy at times that ships are loading or offloading. The coal mine is always an active place: convicts dig the coal from the cliffs near the harbour, carry it to a dump near the wharves, and load it by wheelbarrow onto waiting ships. Coal mining is sufficiently hard and dangerous work to act as an effective punishment for convicts who misbehave as well as rending up a valuable resource for the colony.



Possible characters associated with the location:

**Owen McDermot:** An English convict who ran afoul of one of the upper echelons of the NSW Corps in Sydney on account of his refusal to allow the officer to share his common-law convict wife, Meg. To make matters worse the insubordination was witnessed by several junior men of the NSW Corps, making retaliation from the slighted officer both swift and severe. In the end the officer was able to trump up such a list of charges that the magistrate found that a sentence in Coal River settlement was “by far the most lenient resolution of the matter.” To make matters worse, McDermot has now received word from other convict arrivals that his soldier foe has recently taken Meg to be his own wife. Owen is incandescent with rage and has vowed to “stick the bastard” the first chance he gets.

## COAL RIVER CONVICT CAMP

**Where is it:** The camp is situated at the mouth of the Coal River (later renamed Hunter River).

**What is it:** The convict camp at Coal River includes a convict lumber yard. The camp itself is enclosed in a log wall. Patrols are frequent and punishments cruel, with many floggings ordered by the Commandant. As a rule of thumb Keepers should use the flogging rules on page 23 and double any punishments.

**What happens there:** This is where convicts sleep at night and eat their meals. It is from here that they are sent out daily on work details. Conditions here are terrible, even compared to convict life in Sydney. The convicts here are frequently at starvation level because of lack of food and rarely have adequate clothes and footwear. Venereal disease amongst their number is very common.

There are only two types of work detail:

- *Mining Coal:* groups of convicts are sent down to the beach with an overseer and forced to hand-cut coal-bearing rocks from the cliff faces. This is gruelling work and many perish either from sheer exhaustion or from the frequent floggings they receive.
- *Timber Cutting:* other convicts are sent in groups of about 10 with an overseer to venture out into the virgin forests in the hinterland around the settlement. The overseer picks a

suitable stand of trees to fell for timber and the convicts must chop it down, cut it up into pieces small enough to carry, and haul the lumber back to camp in the evening.

Because conditions are so dire at Coal River, it is not uncommon for convicts to abscond – literally going bush. However convicts escaping in this way very rarely fare well. Often they are found by groups of local Aboriginal people, who either spear them or take them back to the Coal River camp for a reward. Others simply perish in the wilderness, usually from starvation. It is very uncommon for an escaped convict to survive long enough to make the trek all the way back to the settled regions of the colony.

Possible characters associated with the location:

**Edward Nail,** Irish convict and rebel: Nail was one of the convicts who took part in the Castle Hill convict uprising of 1804. At the time he was a close personal friend of Phillip Cunningham, the charismatic man who fomented that uprising (although now he tries to do everything to play down that association). Nail was a confidante of Cunningham and knows things about the man’s longer-term plans that nobody living now knows.

## COAL RIVER BARRACKS

**Where is it:** Adjacent to the convict camp

**What is it:** The barracks is a strong stone and mud building with a stone guardhouse. Normal staff are a Commandant, 1 Officer, 1 marine, 2 NCOs, 12 privates, 1 storekeeper and a surgeon. The NCOs sleep in the guard house.

**What happens there:** soldiering and plotting new ways to mistreat convicts.

Possible characters associated with the location:

**Lt Charles Throsby,** commandant of the Coal River settlement: Throsby was previously naval surgeon on the *Coromandel* and transferred to Coal River as assistant surgeon. He became Commandant after his predecessor Ensign Draffen went insane. Throsby is irritable and suffers from a speech impediment but is basically a humane man who also had a strong record of conciliatory conduct towards the Aboriginal peoples



## ABORIGINAL SETTLEMENTS NEAR COAL RIVER

**Where is it:** there are Aboriginal settlements scattered in the woodlands all around Coal River. The “Coal River Tribe” is in fact two distinct Aboriginal peoples, the Awabakal and the Worimi. Awabaki land is to the south of Coal River settlement while Worimi is in the north. Many other peoples live in surrounding areas, but these are the ones whites are most likely to encounter.

**What is it:** These Aboriginal peoples live in an area of abundance of food and water, though there are rules against greed and over-exploitation. Snakes and lizards are considered food only allowed by elders; for others to eat them is taboo. Young women dive for sea food off the seashore. The rivers are fished and the bushland hunted. Complex trade routes by foot and canoe intersect the various language groups of the area.

**What happens there:** Generally, the Aboriginal peoples around Coal River are content to simply go about their normal lives, surviving as their people have for thousands of years. They are unsympathetic to and distrustful of the whites. Aboriginal women are sometimes kidnapped or assaulted by the white men of Coal River. Convicts escaping to the bush are usually killed or brought back. The only successful ones are those escapees patient enough to learn the local taboos and Aboriginal culture and behave with restraint – in many cases, such individuals are permitted by the indigenous people to assimilate into their society.

## Other Settled Places

The regions surrounding Sydney township and Parramatta are dotted with farmsteads, fields and the occasional military outpost. A brief outline of these outlying areas is provided below. Keepers should remember the limits of settlement are not broad, with only a few pockets of European settlement.

## EAST OF SYDNEY

**Woolloomooloo** – this is Cadigal hunting ground and a sacred space. It is a horseshoe shaped valley east of Sydney township containing rolling hills and the remains of bushland, much of which has been cleared. It ends in a high escarpment to the east. The valley is drained by the Yurong Creek.

**South Head** – South Head is the southern headland of Port Jackson Bay. A lookout has stood on the coast since the arrival of white settlers but much of its hinterland is undeveloped. The nearby cove and freshwater pond have made it an ideal place for the indigenous Cadigal people who live there. The early colonists erected a lookout hut and a signal flagpole on the very head itself as well as a small pyramid-shaped obelisk for use as a navigational aid for ships at sea. Apart from these isolated structures the land is entirely undeveloped.

## SOUTH OF SYDNEY

**Botany Bay** is a large shallow bay south of the Sydney settlement that was originally intended (by Cook) to be the primary site of settlement in New South Wales. It is very swampy land and has sandy soil, with only one notable European resident, Edmund Redmond. The Kameygal people have lived in the area for around 9,000 years. They have a village, Barangaroo here, and their chief is Bennelong (see page 45). Prior to being exposed to European diseases, their number was around 1,000. Fishing, shell lime and salt are the main products.

**Point Solander** is the name given to the headland on the southern side of Botany Bay. It was here that James Cook first set foot on Australian soil in 1770; the location is named after Daniel Solander a scientist on Cook’s expedition. The area is entirely unsettled by Europeans at this time.

**Cooks River** is a river that flows through southwest Sydney and into the bay. North of Cooks River is Cadigal land.

**Cape Banks** is a headland of the Botany Bay area, though accessible only after a climb.

**Georges River** runs from swamp lands in the south and drains into the Bay. It is 80 kilometres of broad waterways and is the main tributary of Botany Bay. Sharks are known to inhabit Georges River. The area between this and Cooks River is Bidjigal country, the clan of Pemulwuy and Tedbury.

## NORTH OF THE HARBOUR

**Lane Cove** is a small settlement around 4 miles (7 km) northwest of Sydney. Its original inhabitants are Cammeraigal people who call it Turrumburra. It sits on the northern banks of the Lane Cove river, a very narrow waterway suggesting a ‘lane’. The



land surrounding the river is sandstone with steep rocky ridges and small swamps. There is a convict stockade here and around 30 farms. The Cammer-aigal people regularly attack white settlers, and the convict stockade is supposed to also aid in defence.

**Hunters Hill** is a high peninsula bordered by water on two sides and thick with trees. It is unsettled by Europeans. The aboriginal people are the Wallumattagal who live in shelters made from the local sandstone.

**Field of Mars** – undeveloped common land put aside for community use by Governor King in 1804. Nobody really knows how it got such an unusual name.

## BROKEN BAY AND THE HAWKESBURY MOUTH

**Broken Bay** is a large inlet into the mouth of the Hawkesbury River waterways. The Aboriginal people of this area are the Kuringgai. Like many Sydney Aboriginal people, their numbers have been drastically reduced by the smallpox epidemic of 1789.

## WEST OF PARRAMATTA

There is an abundance of fertile land around the Parramatta region, all the way to the foothills of the imposing – and so-far impenetrable – Blue Mountains some 15 miles (25 km) to the west.

**Toongabbie** – a small settlement on the banks of the Toongabbie Creek. The superintendent, military stockade, and stores are on the north side of the creek. Toongabbie is the site of the original Government Farm which has now been replaced by the farm at Castle Hill. The Toongabbie Creek lies in a valley that has tall timbers and humid, rain-forest like pockets. The mouth of the Creek is Burramattagal land while west and north is Bidjigal country (see also Botany Bay).

**Prospect Hill** is a district to the northwest of Parramatta where early government grants of land for farming were made, initially just to emancipated convicts but later also to military officers. Even by this time the early grazing practices of the European farmers has led to the entire hill being cleared of trees.

## SETTLEMENTS ON THE HAWKESBURY RIVER

The **Hawkesbury River** is a major waterway north of Sydney, comprising around 12 miles (20 km) of

waterway. The breadth of the river is very wide and the bushland dense. The area has rich soil; its original inhabitants were the Dharug people who have been in conflict with white settlers since 1794.

**Richmond Hill** was explored by Governor Phillip and the area settled in 1794 under order of Grose. The settlement was named Green Hills. The population of the Hawkesbury area in 1805 was 1,953 (fifty percent of Sydney's then population). Governor Bligh has a model farm here called 'Blighton'.

## Further Afield

New South Wales is by far the largest British convict colony in this part of the world during the time period covered by *Convicts & Cthulhu*. It is, however, not the only one. There are smaller satellite settlements in Van Diemen's Land and on Norfolk Island. These are described briefly below.

## Van Diemen's Land

The island of Van Diemen's Land (modern Tasmania) was settled under order of Governor King in 1804 in Hobart Town (after a false start in Risdon the year before). Prior to 1803 there is no European settlement at all on the island. The convict colony at Hobart Town, on the river Derwent, was created as a place for excess convicts sent to New South Wales. Its location at the southern tip of the east coast of Australia also makes it ideal also as a military outpost to guard against potential French incursions.

Van Diemen's Land is a place synonymous with brutal punishment and exile at the far end of the earth. Many of its convicts find ways to escape their brutal incarceration, taking to the bush where they become bushrangers (highwaymen) and prey on free settlers and the aboriginal people. In 1806 the colony was on the brink of starvation but under Lt Governor Arthur the economy improved with wheat and wool production booming. More land was cleared for settlement and cultivation but at the cost of Aboriginal kangaroo-hunting ground which was fiercely fought over.

In 1806 the European population of Van Diemen's Land was only 747 with most living off Government stores. The aboriginal population of Van Diemen's Land between 1804 and 1830 went through a shocking decline from around 70,000 to just a



handful (in part because of the so-called “Black War” during which white colonists infamously slaughtered many indigenous groups).

It takes around 3 weeks to sail from Sydney to Hobart Town. In addition to the principal convict settlement at Hobart Town there is a smaller settlement at Port Dalrymple on the northern coast of Van Diemen’s Land.

## Norfolk Island

Norfolk Island is a small volcanic island in the Pacific around 1,000 miles (1,600 km) north-east of Sydney. Like Van Diemen’s Land, Norfolk Island was colonised partly to keep it out of French possession. The island was settled by Lt King (later to become Governor of New South Wales) not long after Sydney was first established. It was founded as a place of secondary punishment, where convicts could be sent to receive even more brutal treatment than they received in Sydney.

The trees on Norfolk Island were originally intended to provide masts for ships in the war against Napoleon, but proved unsuitable for anything but building huts.

In 1806 the population of Norfolk Island is just 694. It takes around 20 days to sail from Sydney to Norfolk Island.

## OTHER PLACES EXPLORED

During this period most of the Australian continent remains a blank on the map; while Europeans have charted the general coastline, almost no exploration has taken place. The area around Port Phillip (modern-day Melbourne) was briefly considered in 1803 when sites for additional penal settlements were sought but the location was found to have insufficient fresh water to be worth settlement (instead, the ships continued onwards to settle Van Diemen’s Land, minus a handful of convicts who used the opportunity to abscond into the bush never to be heard from again).

There has also been a small amount of exploration of the coast north of Sydney, with some ships having travelled as far as Moreton Bay (near modern-day Brisbane). Ships from New South Wales have also made several voyages to investigate the islands of New Zealand, which are known to be home to a very different kind of native population to the Australian Aborigines. There has not yet been any attempt at settlement.

Many of the colony’s explorations grind to a halt in 1803 when the French unexpectedly imprison Matthew Flinders, the foremost sea explorer of the colony, while he is en-route to England. During a stop-over on the island of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean he is captured and detained as a prisoner of war (the Napoleonic wars having recently been declared). He will not be released until 1810.

First Settlement on Van Diemen’s Land







Map of Norfolk Island, 1788





## PART IV: Dark Southern Land



**T**here is much darkness in the bleak penal settlements of New South Wales, and equally there are many horrific mysteries that the newly-arrived Europeans are just starting to encounter as they spread out across the land. Both types of horrors could make fertile inspiration for a *Call of Cthulhu* scenario or campaign set in the *Convicts & Cthulhu* era. The sections which follow provide some examples, although the Keeper is also encouraged to add his or her own creative ideas into the task of populating this new world with its own idiosyncratic terrors.

### Cults in the Colony

Keepers seeking dark-hearted men and women to serve as adversaries in a *Call of Cthulhu* scenario will find a wealth of riches in the early penal

settlements of New South Wales. Almost by design the majority of the population of this isolated place is made up of the detritus of Britain and its Empire—the inconvenient members of its society that do not fit into the accepted mould of respectability. Within this body of free-thinkers, rebels and reprobates there are no shortage of advocates of beliefs in strange and unnatural gods. Some of those keep their black religious practices to themselves, but others are eager that they spread out like a cancer. It is that latter group that is behind several different subversive “cults” currently thriving in New South Wales.

The sections which follow provide some ideas for Mythos-related groups of convicts, soldiers or other colonists that a Keeper could use as adversaries in a scenario or campaign. They are not all necessarily active at all times in this era, or in all the areas of the settlement.



## THE SHARKS-TOOTH CULT

This is largely a convict cult, though some sailors and Aboriginal fishers have been drawn into it. The cult venerates Cthulhu as the “Father of All Sharks”. Sydney Harbour and Georges River have recorded shark attacks and the cult activities mostly centre upon these areas, with places associated with death by shark attack being considered holy. The cult preys on those who no-one will miss – escaped convicts are their favourite victims. They ritually murder their victims and toss them into the waters where sharks have been seen. A ritual to summon the Father of Sharks accompanies the slaying. So far they have succeeded only in attracting large quantities of mundane sharks, although recently rumours have come to light of an unnaturally large beast sighted lurking in the more remote sections of the Georges River.

The head of the cult is the insane convict Ella Carmody. She was given a large shark tooth by a visiting Polynesian sailor and the thing sends messages to her dreams, installing in her the knowledge to worship the Shark Father and appease his foul demands. Her cult now numbers around forty.

## THE INDUSTRIOUS BROTHERS OF THE NEW WORLD

Among the merchants and traders which have established themselves as an important part of Sydney Town, there are many who profess membership in some kind of quasi-secretive mercantile guild or society. For the most part, these are simply commercial cartels who aim to control the money to be made from trade. But one society with a presence in Sydney Town has much more lofty ambitions – the so-called Industrious Brothers of the New World. This group has tentacles spread throughout the entire British Empire and, if the whispered rumours are true, claims to be at least two centuries old. According to common tradition, the Industrious Brothers are controlled from London by a shadowy figure known only as “Brother N.” The cult has a complex agenda: merchants who are members are asked to be on the lookout for items which seem to have some connection to the Cthulhu Mythos. Brothers are also required to offer safe harbour to others of the order who enter their port, and even to kill for them if they are in danger. The Industrious Brothers have a long-running plan to bring to earth a terrible Mythos entity known

only as “The Red Queen.” It is believed that by gathering items of great significance, and promoting cruelty wherever possible, these centuries-old plans might be brought to fruition. While the small group of Sydney-based brothers seldom see signs of rare occult items, there is certainly much that they can do to promote the cruel treatment of convicts. The most experienced Industrious Brother in Sydney – and the de-facto leader of the local “chapter” – is the wealthy ship owner and free settler Chandler Meriwether.

## THE EFFIGY OF SCARS AND SUFFERING

Few convicts belong to this cult, although some masochists are members, giving up some of their own scarred flesh. Most of the cult’s members are gaolers, members of the NSW Corps and some civil servants of a peculiarly degenerate or sadistic bent. The cult collects the flayed skin of convicts to create a giant monument to the suffering in the colony. The monument is hidden in the forests around Toongabbie. The local Aboriginal people shun it and have tried to destroy it several times, but it resists any mundane efforts at destruction. The cult believes when the monument is complete the entire Parramatta region will become despoiled as though by its master Abhoth the Unclean. However no one is sure what will constitute its ‘completion’ so it simply grows bigger and more obscene.

The cult venerates Abhoth; during its ceremonies the effigy bubbles and writhes like Abhoth itself, as hideous pieces of the monument drop off and crawl away. The cult is headed by Thomas Nightmonger, a convict overseer, a sadist and possible cannibal. Nightmonger was previously a sailor and has been influenced by cults of degenerates all over the world.

## THE OUTCAST DREAMERS

This cult is exclusively made up exclusively of Aboriginal people from many different areas who have become outcasts from their own people. Most have been shunned because they have turned away from traditional law and instead taken up the worship of Dark Gods revered by the invading white men. Exactly how such teachings became known to such a wide-spread group of Aboriginal tribes remains a mystery. It cannot be denied, however, that their loathsome message holds some allure for Aboriginal people on the perimeter of their respective tribal groups – outcasts.



The Outcast Dreamers band together despite their different backgrounds, primarily as a matter of survival – they are hated by their families and tribes because they have forsaken the Dreaming; they are hated by most of the white settlers because they carry with them the unclean aura of the Great Old Ones. Ironically, a few foolish white settlers believe that the Outcast Dreamers are a more “enlightened” group of Aborigines, since their values seem more familiar to European sensibilities. Such people sometimes support and shelter the Outcasts; this usually ends badly for the settlers.

The loosely-affiliated group is led by a man who calls himself “Old Barney”. He is a scarred and evil Burramattagal man who was rejected as a clever man and elder by his people, went over to the whites, and now delights in destroying the spirits of those of his race unfortunate enough to fall under his malignant sway. For the most part he venerates Yog Sothoth, whom he has seen in a dream as a transcendent collision of colours and spheres that has driven him mad. His ceremonies are held all around the hinterland of Sydney, constantly moving. This is out of necessity – if any of his people track him down they will spear him immediately. He knows how to summon byakhees and nightgaunts and some less recognisable horrors. He teaches others of the Outcast Dreamers the rudiments of Mythos-powered magic; his goal is to raise a small army of disciples which he can use to take revenge on the Aboriginal tribe that spurned him. If he is successful in taking control of the Burramattagal clan he also has more vague megalomaniacal plans to turn Yog Sothoth against the white invaders.

## THE BACCHANAL CLUB

There are many people within the colony of New South Wales whose morals and principles are sullied. But even by the low standards of the colony the depraved actions of a few core individuals would raise eyebrows if they were common knowledge. This shadowy group – which comprises some of the most powerful men in the colony, along with NSW Corps officers and some carefully-selected convicts – meets once a month in an isolated place for debauched and licentious parties. Locations change but one of the favoured spots is the Pyramid on South Head (see “East of Sydney” on page 53); occasionally the wild orgies are held in town – at the warehouse of some amoral merchant.

Whether the Bacchanal Club is merely a harmless group of profligates or an actual Mythos cult is up to the Keeper to decide. They could make an interesting (if somewhat disgusting) group of adversaries for investigators or equally could serve a role as a red herring.

The leader of the Club is Judge Advocate Richard Atkins (see page 38). Other notable members are Jeremiah Stone, a Sydney merchant and Charles Morrison, a convict overseer.

The Keeper could introduce the club using any of the following leads:

- Each issue of the Gazette published on the weekend preceding the full moon contains a cryptic announcement: “Wanted for the schooner Delphi, which sails on Tuesday next” (or whatever day the full moon), “a supply of seed. Any persons willing to contribute to supply the same, are desired to make their proposal to Mr. Richard A. at the traditional locality.”
- Some of the members have an unfortunate taste for lurid drama and wear face masks while capering around in their cups. It’s not uncommon to find one, discarded, at South Head Pyramid. More of these masks can be found in the NSW Corps Barracks, a back room of the Black Swan, and Jeremiah Stone’s warehouse.
- Some of the women convicts tell strange stories about having been plied with drink and taken out into the bushland somewhere by a group of men. They claim all wore masks, but some of them were certain to be NSW Corps officers, or so the women say. There are rumours of naked dances around some kind of monolith too.
- If sufficiently bribed, some of the workers at Simeon Lord’s hotel are willing to tell who buys the most illegal rum from them. While the list is fairly predictable, one oddity is the curious delivery they are asked to make once a month up to the Pyramid on South Head. The road leading there is in terrible condition, so it’s always a chore to get the barrels up the hill. Once they’re there they just offload their cargo onto the grass and return to town. “Get paid a pretty penny to keep quiet about it too ... Lord knows who fetches it, but the barrels are always gone the next day.”



## Indigenous Horrors

Long before the arrival of the Europeans, there were indigenous horrors cursing the land of Australia. Keepers who wish to make use of home-grown sources of menace might wish to consult the sections in *Secrets of Australia* that describe a range of Australian cryptids, Australian variants of traditional Mythos creatures and unique Australian spirit-based entities.

Some ideas are provided below for specific places and entities that have ties to the area settled by the New South Wales colonists.

**Blue Mountains Yowies:** The settled regions of New South Wales spread closer and closer to the Blue Mountains which form a (thus far) impenetrable barrier to the west of the colony. As Europeans stray closer to these formidable mountains they have begun to hear warnings from the local Aboriginal peoples – there are creatures that lurk in the wooded hills and mountains, furry man-shaped beasts called Yowies. In the time period covered by *Convicts & Cthulhu* only a few scant rumours are beginning to emerge about these hairy hominids. It is not until 1813 that the first official account of a sighting is lodged by a soldier. Nevertheless there are many people living in the outlying regions – west of Parramatta and in the most inland regions of the Hawkesbury – that are happy of stout wooden doors on their cabins, especially on the nights when the unexplained howling sounds can be heard coming from the darkened woods.

**Salt Water Dreaming:** For many of the Aboriginal people in the coastal regions around Sydney, there is a close spiritual link with the sea and with creatures beneath the waves. This also translates to the spirit horrors that haunt the nightmares of those people as well as their Alcheringa tales. Europeans who stray into sacred places along the coast line may find themselves running afoul of these salt water spirits who, while relatively slow to anger, are destructive in their own right. There are hushed tales told among convicts at Sydney of a work crew sent out to Botany Bay to clear a space for ships to unload. After half a day hacking at the native trees which hugged the coastline the convicts were startled by a horrific sound – an eruption of something from the placid waters of the bay. Of the three survivors that made it back to Sydney,

none were soldiers. All told conflicting stories of what exactly had burst forth from the depths. The only detail they could agree on was that whatever had taken the dozen men it possessed the most disturbing and fearsome array of razor-sharp teeth.

**Wild Bush Dreaming:** Aboriginals who dwell further inland have other tales of spirits that live in the hills, mountains, lakes, and rivers. Some of them play an important part in protecting the land from other, even worse, spirits that are always waiting on the threshold trying to get in. The clans around Parramatta tell particular stories about a spirit that lives in the mocking but distinctive call made by the Kookaburra, a bird prevalent in that area. When a dozen NSW Corps fully-armed soldiers disappeared after having been sent out into the nearby bushland to survey a new road, the Aboriginal trackers brought in to find them told the Europeans one thing. That was not to bother looking for the lost men; they were lost forever to the mocking cries of Old Man Kookaburra. Exactly what happened to the men is a mystery.

**Timeless Battles at the Field of Mars:** Nobody is entirely sure how the bushland regions between Lane Cove and Parramatta came to bear the unusual name “Field of Mars,” although its reference to the Roman god of war is strangely apt. Because this otherwise unremarkable piece of pristine gum forest stands in the very location where many millions of years ago a great battle took place between two alien species – the Great Race of Yith and the denizens of Tindalos. As described in *Secrets of Australia*, the war between these two powerful races was as ferocious as it was (to human-minds at least) unfathomable. The nature of a war between two races that both have powers of time travel is well beyond human conception – but however such a battle across the aeons was waged it left a most definite mark upon a number of places (and perhaps times) in Australia. The Field of Mars is one such place, an eerily still place that many visitors find unsettling but for no obvious reason. From time to time there have been curious and inexplicable events reported here. Sometimes it is simply the experience of a convict gang or NSW Corps patrol that experiences “missing time” or goes missing for a day or two only to reappear with no recollection of the time that has passed. Less common are the manifestations – occasionally, echoes of the ancient war (or perhaps refugees from one of its battles)





mysteriously appear in the Field of Mars, often to simply disappear an hour or a day later. Sometimes these are foul slavering things, beastlike creatures from Tindalos which literally ooze from the angles between tree branches. Other times these are semi-substantial vehicular weapons driven by the alien minds of Yithians projected from their homeland half a billion years ago.

**Accidentally Alcheringa:** While most of the convicts and soldiers of the New South Wales colony are content to indulge in familiar vices brought with them from England – rum and tobacco for the most part – in some places the supply of such things is scarce. In remote places such as those surrounding Coal River or the upper Hawkesbury, settlers and convicts who yearn for intoxication have traded with local Aboriginal people to obtain supplies of Pituri leaves. The settlers think of this as a kind of native chewing tobacco, and in small doses it does have the effects of a mild stimulant (although it tastes revolting). What none of the European chewers of Pituri know is that these leaves have been used for thousands of years as an important aid in contacting the spirits and stories of Alcheringa, the Aboriginal Dreaming. Chewing a small amount of Pituri will probably never affect anyone enough to experience anything strange but already there are a few heavy

users within the convict population who have begun to see unusual visions and feel odd compulsions to enter into ancient lands and stories. Most of those are too confused by these sensations to do anything about them, but should anyone ever attempt a more scientific study of the odd phenomena it may prove a mystifying link to a strange and timeless place of legend. One thing that is certain is that no Aboriginal person will be eager to assist such investigation – whoever from their ranks sold the Pituri to the white folks has already broken taboo. Nobody will want to make this transgression even worse.

## New Nightmares

An inventive Keeper can easily find ways to weave the traditional gods and monsters of the Cthulhu Mythos into the dystopian setting of colonial New South Wales. These horrors could have been brought along with European settlers – perhaps the darker side of the dangerous beliefs of a few – or may have arrived as a result of the strange collision of ancient occult forces and the new beliefs of the colonists.

Some specific ideas are included below; for further suggestions, consult Chaosium's *Secrets of Australia* which contains an extensive section on Mythos horrors in the Australian setting.



**The Coming of the Ghouls:** This era has the dubious honour of marking the earliest-recorded sightings of Ghouls on the Australian continent. At some time in the late 1790s or early 1800s these necrophagous horrors come to inhabit the graveyards of Sydney and in particular the convict graveyards. How these creatures came to be in the colony is a mystery. One possibility is that someone consciously smuggled a small colony of Ghouls aboard one of the numerous filthy ships that still transport new convicts from England. Why someone would do such a thing is anyone's guess. Keepers may have other more outlandish ideas – perhaps the Ghouls somehow found a way to New South Wales via the dreams of European free settlers, that connected this place with Earth's Dreamlands for the first time? Or maybe the foul cannibal practices occasionally adopted by escaped convicts spontaneously devolved them into sub-human beasts?

**Strange Artefacts Washed Ashore:** A handful of people believe that somewhere deep below the seas east of New South Wales lie the ruins of one or more ancient cities of the Elder Things. Abandoned and submerged millions of years ago, it is only thanks to the incredible technology of that pre-human species that anything remains of such constructs. But from time-to-time stray objects wash ashore along the New South Wales coast that defy easy explanation; perhaps some of these are detritus from that vastly ancient civilisation. Conceivably such discoveries could be items of ancient technology or the bodies of long-dead creatures. Alternatively the flotsam that breaks free from the Elder city might not be dead at all. After all, the horrific servitors of the Elder things – the Shoggoths – seem able to survive even the most protracted periods of containment.

**Black Stone Conceals:** One of the few efforts that the penal colony of New South Wales has taken to exploit the natural resources of the land is in the extraction of coal from the cliff-faces at Coal River (modern Newcastle). But what might lie behind the extracted seams of coal? There are several different types of horrors that have chosen to bury themselves below the rocks of Australia – imprudent digging might accidentally disturb one of those hidden nests. One likely candidate for a surprise horror discovery might be a hibernation pod of the Arkaroo – the Serpent Men sub-species that escaped Lemuria, choosing to bury themselves when the climate of Ice Age Australia made their

survival questionable. But there are other horrors that digging might unearth as well – while the coal of Coal River is sedimentary rock perhaps that is simply a shallow layer that covers a volcanic basalt core laid down aeons ago as part of the ancient cities of the leprous Flying Polyps. Does the wind that whistles through the lonely valleys and dales hide something ancient and terrible? Might the pickaxes and shovels of the convicts one day free something that would best be left buried?

**Dead But Dreaming:** Of all the far-flung places colonised by Europeans throughout the world, very few are situated closer to sunken R'lyeh than New South Wales. Exactly what consequence this relative proximity might have upon the dreams of those sensitive few who have found themselves transported to the harsh penal settlement, or who have travelled there freely. Might the prevalence of hysteria and madness among NSW Corps officers and government officials somehow be caused by sanity sapping influences of Cthulhu or his spawn? And could it be that the sudden and unexplained formation of a local group among Sydney convicts which claims to worship the "Father of All Sharks" is somehow a manifestation of this baleful blight?

**The Fearful Hawkesbury:** The Hawkesbury River is a serene and peaceful place, much favoured by free settlers because of its fertile soils. But there are stretches of the river where the beauty of the unspoiled river takes on an aspect which inspires most people to dark thoughts. These are the places haunted by lloigor, whose presence has corrupted otherwise idyllic sites into fearful and psychically-corrosive places for human settlers. As the population of farmers in the Hawkesbury continues to increase – it is a particular favourite place for land grants by Governors King and Bligh – inevitably people have come to live within the psychic auras of these terrible creatures. How far such settlers have been perverted by their influence, nobody can say. But those who harboured blackness in their heart before coming to the colony are particularly fertile subjects for the lloigor's dark manipulations. Alternatively, farmlands – maybe even land owned by high officials or powerful merchants – might suddenly be poisoned by the unearthly influences of creatures such as a Colour Out Of Space.





# PART V: Mythos Tales



## Introductory Scenario: Un-Fresh Off The Boat

This short introductory adventure is designed to introduce new characters (and players) to the penal settlement of New South Wales. The investigators are passengers aboard one of two ships – the *Emily* and the *Lulworth Cove* – which after months at sea are just arriving at the harbour at Port Jackson. However, the spread of a mystery illness has caused both ships to be forbidden permission to dock at Government Wharf. This leaves hundreds of convicts, army men and free settlers stranded in the harbour, within sight of their final destination. Strange events prompt the masters of the two ships

to request an investigation ... but only a handful of persons on both vessels are free from the curious plague. This motley group of criminals, gaolers and settlers are the investigators.

The scenario is intended to occupy only a single session of play, and is suitable for either new or experienced players. It caters to a variety of different investigator backgrounds – those who are convicts or members of the New South Wales Corps will be travelling on a government-owned convict transport ship, the *Emily*, while more salubrious types (higher ranking government officials or free settlers) have passage aboard the *Lulworth Cove*, a merchant vessel. The two ships are sailing in convoy – for safety – but there is little communication between the two, other than when the pair have stopped for occasional layovers at ports *en route*.



## Keeper's Background

The mystery illness aboard the *Emily* and the *Lulworth Cove* is an unexpected side-effect of a convoluted plot by an obscure occult group, who aim to smuggle an unearthly cargo to the colony of New South Wales.

The Heralds of the Silver Dawn are a secretive and esoteric order which venerates several of the more impenetrable and abstract gods of the Cthulhu Mythos – Daoloth and Yog-Sothoth being the foremost. The Heralds are known to have membership in several parts of England, Scotland and elsewhere in Europe; there are whispers that they also have brothers in the American colonies. Recently the group founded a new (albeit tiny) chapter of sorcerous practitioners in the recently-settled colony of New South Wales. This group has some extremely ambitious plans for taking mystical ownership of the vast new territory of Australia, but one of the first problems it must overcome is protecting its arcane rituals and places from prying eyes. In other places, the Heralds have been able to remain concealed by guarding its sacred places with Mythos creatures that either frighten or kill any who threaten to discover their secrets. The group's favourite "guard dogs" are enormous leech-like creatures from another world or dimension who have been called many different names, but often go by the simple name "Watchers" or "Watcher Spawns."

In coded messages sent between the Herald sect in New South Wales and the parent organisation in England, a plot was hatched to smuggle two of these alien horrors to Australia aboard a ship. Transporting such a horror in its adult form would be both conspicuous and highly dangerous, so the order developed a more subtle plan. Knowing that the eggs of these alien leeches can survive (and even incubate) within a human host, the group made contact with a dark-hearted man who was already signed-on to travel to New South Wales to become its new prison chaplain.

The Reverend Elijah Fredericks is an individual around who controversy and notoriety clusters. Born sightless to a middle-class family, he rose to some prominence as a man of the cloth, ostensibly due to his hard work and piety. But the reality is that Reverend Fredericks is a man possessed of many dark and carnal desires, and not above blackmailing those he despoils to further his lot. Like

many opportunists, his complex schemes unravelled eventually and his superiors within the church ordered that the "blind preacher" should take up a new post ... in the prison colony of New South Wales. With this desperate pronouncement upon him, the apparently generous offer made by the representative of the Heralds – which would make him one of the wealthiest men in the new colony – was something his overriding greed could not refuse.

The Heralds arranged for Fredericks to be taken to a secret place and operated upon by a surgeon in their employ. The medical man removed the two useless eyes which sat behind the preacher's permanently-closed eyelids and replaced those orbs with a pair of alien eggs – two larval Watcher Spawn. A few days later he sailed aboard the *Lulworth Cove*, bound for Botany Bay.

## THE BEST LAID PLANS

The delicate machinations set in train by the Heralds of the Silver Dawn have become derailed due to a pair of complications. The first is mundane: owing to poor weather, the voyage of the *Lulworth Cove* to Australia took a week longer than even the most pessimistic estimates made at the outset. This has meant that the things growing within Reverend Fredericks are now virtually at the point of hatching.

The second complication that the arcane order did not foresee was the carnal urges of the apparently-pious chaplain. Although blind and not especially attractive, Fredericks has gone to great lengths to fraternise with as many women aboard the *Lulworth Cove* as he can, but fair means or foul. He has also twice been aboard the prisonship, while the two were laid over in a port *en route* waiting for better winds. During those visits he had intimate relations with numerous convict girls. More than merely being disgraceful, the sexual prodigiousness of Fredericks is important for another reason. Because of the unearthly cargo he carries, everyone who comes into close physical contact with him develops a bizarre infection. Strange yellow scabs begin to form everywhere on the victims' skin, especially on their face. To make matters worse this medically-unknown disease, although not fatal, is highly contagious. By the time the convoy of ships has reached Port Jackson Bay, almost everybody on board is very visibly unwell, and covered with scabs in a most alarming fashion.



The Blind Chaplain, Elijah Fredericks



Unsurprisingly, when the boat brought the harbourmaster to inspect the *Lulworth Cove* and the *Emily*, he did not even bother to set foot aboard the ships. Instead he placed both in quarantine, forbidding any landing for at least a fortnight. The Colonial Government would permit no person to leave either ship. The ships could remain in the harbour for a night or two – a half-mile from its final destination, which is tantalisingly visible to all. Then the corrupted ships would need to return to North Head and remain anchored until such time as the quarantine was lifted.

## MAKING A BREAK

While the Governor's proclamation was bad news for everyone aboard the two ships, it was especially alarming for Reverend Elijah Fredericks. Feeling the terrible pressure within his skull caused by the two eggs preparing to hatch, the man of the cloth was driven to a desperate act. In the middle of the night, the chaplain crept to the deck of the *Lulworth Cove* and jumped into the inky blackness of Sydney Harbour, apparently with the notion of swimming to land. As insane as this plan sounds, it worked – primarily due to the enhanced senses of the unborn aliens inside the blind man. Arriving at a private wharf in the region known as "The Rocks" to the west of Sydney Cove, Fredericks was met by a member of the local sect of the Heralds, a NSW Corps sergeant called Rupert Rowsthorn. The local

Heralds had been waiting for this precious cargo, and had already prepared a special place for the blessed birth of the Watcher Spawn to take place.

The breaking of the quarantine order by Fredericks was seen by several people aboard the *Lulworth Cove*, and presents the master of that ship with something of a dilemma – whether to notify the Colonial Governor and suffer his wrath, or stay silent and chance the infection spreading to run rampant throughout Sydney. After some deliberation with the master of the *Emily*, a plan was agreed. A small group – including only those who clearly bear no sign of the illness – would row to the Government Wharf to inform the officials of the breach, beg forgiveness, and fawningly offer to find and apprehend the absconded clergyman.

## Involving the Investigators

Investigators begin the scenario aboard either the *Lulworth Cove* (if they are a soldier or free settler), or aboard the *Emily* (if they are a convict). They have had an unpleasant and lengthy journey to the colony of New South Wales – see **Handout 1** and **Handout 2** for accounts of the trip from the convict and non-convict perspective.

The investigators are each among the handful of persons aboard either ship who bear no signs of the hideous yellow scabs which mark those afflicted by the mystery disease. Because of this they will be selected by the master of their vessel to be part of the delegation. Any convicts who disagree with the suggestion will be given a sound flogging and asked again. Free settlers and military types will have their objections listened to more carefully, but ultimately the needs of the two ships outweighs any personal wishes, at least in the minds of the masters. Thus the chosen characters will be compelled to assist.

The investigators do not need to know each other prior to the delegation being assembled, although they may well do so. Convict investigators who have been picked for the mission will have their leg-irons – which have been in place since they left England months ago – broken away, probably to their relief. If the investigator group includes military officers, the highest ranking of those will be assigned responsibility for ensuring that any



## THE VOYAGE OUT (CONVICT VERSION)

You are a convict – a criminal who has been convicted of a crime in England and sentenced to transportation to the prison colony of New South Wales. Your crime wasn't anything particularly serious, certainly not killing someone or nothing. It was probably something like petty theft or embezzlement or something like that. Or perhaps you are one of those "Irish troublemakers" who are viewed with great suspicion by the English authorities. Your sentence might have been transportation for 7 or 14 years; or it might have been for life. Chances are that before boarding the prisonship bound for Botany Bay you already served some time on one of the disgusting prison hulks, decommissioned warships converted to makeshift gaols.

Before embarking aboard the prisonship *Emily*, all convicts were scrubbed down in an effort to cleanse them of any disease or ailments. Each was then put in double leg irons and formed into messes of six men or six women. When all prisoners were below decks, the soldiers and crew boarded, followed by the master. The cells aboard the ship reeked of fresh whitewash, a crude way of removing any disease from previous cargoes. After taking his pay from the Government, including money to cover all victuals for we convicts, the master ordered many parts of the hold then occupied by convicts to be cleared, bunching us up into much more confined conditions such that we had perhaps eighteen inches between one man and the next. This rearrangement was to allow space for the master's personal goods which he privately intends to sell when he arrived in New South Wales.

Conditions aboard the *Emily* have proven horrific. The ship has been subject to the most terrifying storms which have created delays as the ship took refuge first at Madeira, then in the Brazills, then finally at the Cape o' Good Hope. At each of these month-long layovers the free men among the crew (and in particular those aboard the trade

vessel which accompanies the *Emily*) indulged in the most depraved and drunken ways, sometimes coming aboard the prisonship to have sport with convict women who remained chained in their berths.

The most disastrous turn came some days after the *Emily* had departed the Cape – it was then that the first signs of plague were seen. It was a most peculiar strain that caused those afflicted by it to grow disgusting yellow scabs covering their skin. Some victims grew such thick crusty scabs across their whole face that they could barely see. The surgeon aboard the *Emily* bickered constantly with the master, calling for cargo to be moved to better allow air into the below-deck regions where we were held. But it was all in vain. The disease continued to run rampant. Within a few weeks you were one of only a handful of men and women who had not come down with the terrible plague. A few men-folk among the convicts, spurred on by their desperation, banded together to attempt a mutiny but this was short-lived. Those responsible were placed in additional neck-irons, the weight of which coupled with their weakened state meant they could scarcely keep their heads aloft.

The weeks that followed were like a preacher's sermon about what Hell is. The ships heaved about in heavy seas and all aboard – convicts, gaolers and crew alike – burned with the fever of disease. Someone said that you were soon to come up to your eighth month at sea, and though you long ago lost track of the days you could well believe it. They never said it would be so long a voyage, but then they never said it would be so filled with foul storms nor plague. At least the news is that soon it will come to an end – a day ago the heads of Port Jackson were sighted, and a rumour has gone around the masses of slaves that the harbourmasters boat has visited the *Emily* and its partner. Surely this perdition must soon end.

## THE VOYAGE OUT (FREE SETTLER & MILITARY VERSION)

You are a passenger aboard a ship in a convoy of two vessels shortly to arrive in the colony of New South Wales. While most of those travelling aboard one of the ships – the *Emily* – are filthy low-life convicts, you come to the colony of your own free will. You might be a military man or civil official, due to take up a post in New South Wales, or you might be a Free Settler, coming to the newly-discovered country of Australia to find a new life.

Although you have experienced many horrific sights during your life, the long and uncomfortable voyage from England has sorely tested your reserves. The convoy of vessels seems to have been cursed from the outset. Sailing from Portsmouth to Madeira, the journey began with favourable winds but the weather quickly devolved as did the behaviour of the crews. Drunken and lewd behaviour were commonly seen. When the ships' masters agreed a short layover in Madeira to await more favourable winds, the more depraved crewmen used this as an opportunity to engage in wild debauchery. The same was repeated a month later when the ships reached Rio de Janeiro (again agreed as a layover) and for a third time at the Cape of Good Hope. The very worst of the weather, however, was felt after the ships had rounded the Cape and set their goal for New South Wales. Seas higher than any you have ever before witnessed became a daily challenge.

In the weeks that followed, disaster struck both ships in the form of an outbreak of some form of plague, the like of

which baffled even the surgeons aboard. The illness seems to have run rampant through the convict ship, the *Emily*, but to the alarm of all souls it also manifested aboard the free ship *Lulworth Cove* – your ship.

After a month or more among the fierce weather of the Roaring Forties, the ships sighted land, a most dispiriting and desolate sight. Most alien was every tree and shrub upon which you cast your eye. Equally alarming was the degree to which the plague – a most peculiar affliction that rendered uncomfortable yellow scabs on all parts of the face and body of its victims – had spread. Thankfully you have been spared, one of only a few people who remain unaffected.

The last few weeks of the journey have proven taxing, not only because of the miasma of decay that exudes from the plague victims. You also tire of life aboard this ship – in England you were told that the voyage out might take as long as six months but now almost eight have passed since your departure. So it was with some excitement that you greeted the news that the headlands of Port Jackson had been sighted, and even greater excitement once the ships had entered into the vast harbour beyond. This joy was not to last. Approaching the landings at Port Jackson, the ships were met by a boat sent from the harbourmaster at Sydney; those aboard took but a moments consideration to hand down a most terrible decree – quarantine!



convict investigators does not abscond. Such duties are taken seriously: the officer is instructed to simply shoot any convicts who try to escape. If the entire investigator group is made up of convicts, the master of the *Lulworth Cove* will find a plague-free soldier, Corporal Waterstone (use the generic soldier statistics on page 93), and give him absolute authority over the entire group.

## The Rumour Mill

Although the masters are eager for the delegation to set out as soon as possible, it will take a short time for the boats to be readied and convict irons to be broken. During this time, investigators aboard either ship can begin to make some inquiries about the current situation.

Investigators aboard the *Lulworth Cove* who ask around can easily find a few unhealthy-looking sailors who were abovedecks when the strange figure emerged and threw himself into the sea. Unfortunately these superstitious and working-class labourers are evasive when talking with “their betters.” In general these eyewitnesses will be reluctant to pass on their stories for fear that they might be punished; if an investigator can placate those fears (with a **Persuade**, **Fast Talk** or **Charm**) they will haltingly pass on what they know: just after midnight they saw a figure dressed in a chaplain’s clothes emerge from below decks, hastily scurry to the prow of the ship and hurl himself over the side. The deckhands heard a splash as the man hit the water, and raced to see if the drowning man required rescue. To their surprise the man was not thrashing around but purposefully swimming – like a man possessed – making a bee-line toward the distant lights of Sydney Town.

Asking around among the officers of the *Lulworth Cove* also quickly establishes the same basic story, with the additional detail that an inventory of all passengers taken this morning determined that one man was missing – the Reverend Elijah Fredericks, a blind man.

Investigations aboard the *Emily* reveal less – although several of the crew saw the man jump from the prow of the *Lulworth Cove*, none were close enough to determine the identity of the suicidal swimmer. The watch in the crow’s nest reports following the progress of the swimming maniac

for at least twenty minutes in the clear moonlight, bringing him close to the wharves of Sydney Cove.

Any convict investigators who discuss the wild tale with others of their kind find that one convict woman seems especially fraught with distress. If suitably **Charmed** or **Intimidated**, she will give up her secret – she fears that the man who went over the side was “me sweetheart;” the Reverend Fredericks who had marked her out as “a special soul.” If asked why she believes this she reveals that during the last layover of the trip the Reverend came to visit her, and told her that he had a “very special appointment” in Sydney that he must meet by a certain date. Delays along the trip were causing him alarm – and if any further hurdles stood in the way of his arrival he might just jump overboard and swim for it. The simple girl thought nothing of this ridiculous suggestion at the time.

While none of the investigators have spoken with the unusual Reverend, everyone is familiar with his strange appearance and demeanour. Fredericks is blind, with both eyes permanently closed, but despite this impediment makes quite an imposing figure. He preaches a “fire-and-brimstone” message which is well-received by most aboard the *Lulworth Cove*, but he is also acerbic and demanding which has led to most other passengers finding him disagreeable. Those asking around aboard either ship will soon learn that most people who met him refer to him either by the nickname “Blind Freddie” or the less flattering nickname “The Whoring Chaplain.” Although most people are too polite to talk about his less-pious habits, it is not difficult to find passengers who were witness to his common carnal practices.

## The Colonial Secretary

Once investigators aboard the *Lulworth Cove* are ready, they are loaded onto a rowboat which makes the short trip across to the *Emily* to receive the investigators joining the delegation from that ship. The combined group must then row to the Government Wharf, a taxing trip that will take half an hour or more. As they approach the wharf they will begin to get a clear view of the penal settlement of Sydney – a ramshackle and run-down collection of primitive-looking buildings, interspersed with desolate crews of convicts doing hard-labour on chain gangs.





When the boat ties up at the Government Wharf they will find that their arrival has been anticipated. A stern-looking figure in a powdered wig waits for them at the end of the wharf, an angry expression etched into his face. This dour individual introduces himself with forced politeness as Edmund Griffin, the Colonial Secretary of New South Wales. He explains that he is the senior-most civil administrator of the colony, and the personal assistant to the Governor himself. Griffin tells the investigators that he was summoned here by the harbourmaster – ruining a perfectly good breakfast – because an alarm had been raised that the Governor’s lawful order of quarantine had been breached. He looks questioningly at the investigators and asks, “Sirs have you anything to say in defence of this criminal act? Or should I simply send for the constable and have you all locked in irons?”

The investigators will presumably plead their case with the Colonial Secretary and plead for clemency. To overcome the man’s suspicious ire the investigators will need to accumulate four successes in opposed rolls pitting one of their social skills (**Charm**, **Persuade** and **Fast Talk**) against his **Insight** skill (which is 55%). Each time an investigator achieves a superior result in the opposed roll, one “success” is accumulated; each time Griffin achieves a superior result, the group loses one “success”. Rolls for

which both sides achieve the same class of result do not affect the tally. As soon as the total reaches 4 successes the investigators have successfully defused Griffin’s anger. If the tally ever reaches -2, or if any of an investigators’ rolls is fumbled (i.e., an 00 is rolled), the Colonial Secretary concludes that the investigators are time-wasting criminals and makes good on his promise to lock them up pending a trial.

Assuming the investigators have explained-away their arrival by mentioning the absconding chaplain, Griffin will begrudgingly say “I suppose I can overlook your presence here if it is solely for the purpose of reclaiming the man who fled from your ship. But word of this incident must eventually reach the Governor, and he is far less accommodating than I. So I caution you, sirs, make haste with your search and return your escapee to the quarantine ship before the wrath of the colony descends upon you!”

## On the Trail of a Blind Man

If the investigators ask Griffin where they should start their search, he merely tuts and turns his back on the investigators. As he walks away, he shouts back “You could check with colony chaplain, Reverend Marsden; I expect your man was supposed to be his new assistant. Up the hill and towards Government House, that’s where you’ll find his office.”

Looking around the desolate scene around Sydney Cove, the investigators can make out several groups of convicts – all in leg-irons – working to demolish a decrepit mud-brick building. Looking up the hill they can see several streets of low, ugly buildings clustered around a feeble stream which flows into the harbour. Further around the cove they can make out a kind of shanty-town huddling the western arm of the cove.

## WORD ON THE STREET

Asking for information from any of the convict teams is a difficult exercise. While most of the convicts are only too pleased to stop their hard manual labour to speak with the investigators, such conversations will almost immediately be interrupted by an overseer. These burly thugs – themselves convicts, but brandishing whips and



canes – treat any kind of delay as excuse to hand out punishment to the “lazy” convict. Investigators may be shocked at the callousness of these men, who seem to casually threaten physical harm to those in their assigned gang. Regardless of these difficulties, questioning the convicts about men seen swimming in the harbour at night is useless – all the convicts that investigators speak with were locked up in the Gaol building last night. If pressed, a convict might suggest asking around one of the dive bars near the harbour or around in “The Rocks.”

Investigators asking around the few dingy bars close to the Government Wharf must succeed in a group **Luck** roll to locate a grizzled labourer who saw something strange last night. If suitably plied with a couple of drops of rum, this emaciated red-cheeked character will tell a tale of how he was working on the riggings of one of the ships when he saw someone swimming through the harbour some distance away from the main wharf. The swimmer seemed to be heading towards “The Rocks.” Despite the man’s very obvious alcoholism (a **Medicine** roll predicts he will be dead within 6 months), his story is sound.

“The Rocks” is the name given to the slum town which huddles against the west edge of Sydney Cove; this is a largely residential district occupied by former slaves and others who have fallen on hard times. Most of the colony avoids coming into its seedy streets, with the exception of the occasional foray to enjoy the attentions of one of the many prostitutes to be found in the area. If the investigators enquire here about a swimming figure they may learn some additional information – but only if the investigators asking the questions all *fail* a **Credit Rating** check (the poor folk of “The Rocks” are distrustful of those with money). Several residents of “The Rocks” witnessed the arrival of the swimming figure, and saw him climb out of a private wharf and meet with a NSW Corps soldier who seemed to have been waiting for him. The soldier gave the swimmer a dry change of clothing and (once he had changed) accompanied him up the hill on to Dawes Point. Nobody can provide a name for the soldier, but some residents of the slum district can easily point out the steep path the two took up the hills behind “The Rocks.”

## THE CRUEL HAND OF MERCY

Investigators who follow Griffin’s idea of tracking down the colony’s head chaplain, Reverend Samuel Marsden, will find this task proving more difficult than expected. Locating the row of Government Offices adjacent to Government House is easy enough – clustered side by side they can see the Commissariat, an office for the colony’s disproportionately many magistrates and officials, and a smaller office for the colony’s chaplain. Unfortunately the latter is stoutly locked. Asking around at one of the other offices the investigators will learn that Reverend Marsden is today overseeing a hanging down in the Gaol.

Visiting the site of Sydney’s rather unimpressive church will achieve a similar result – the Reverend is nowhere to be seen, but someone will know of his task at the Gaol.

Some of the investigators may approach a visit to the Gaol with some trepidation – for convict investigators this is destined to soon be their home, and its dire reputation does not make them look forward to that day. Perhaps alarmingly, the Gaol lives up to its reputation. If investigators attempt to enter this forbidding stone structure, they will find that nobody impedes their passage – particularly if they state that they are here to speak with Reverend Marsden. Visitors will be directed towards the open yard area where the execution is just about to take place. As they walk to this area, the investigators will pass another smaller yard where a convict has been tied to a triangular frame to be flogged. A second convict stands beside the frame, holding a cat-o-nine-tails; as they watch he lets fly with a harsh blow which rips into the already-bloodied back of the convict on the frame. A guard overseeing the punishment sneers at the convict with the whip, “Don’t go easy on ‘im Melford. I know ‘e’s one o’ your filthy friends; if you lay it on soft, I’ll make sure it’s you on the triangle tomorrow.”

When the investigators reach the main yard they see that a large wooden scaffold has been assembled and two men stand on it, each with a noose around their neck. A third figure dressed in a black hood stands to one side of the apparatus with his hand on a rough wooden lever. A large crowd – mostly comprising women and other convicts – looks on in alarm. A man in the traditional dress of a chaplain is standing at the very front of the crowd, shouting



up at the two men on the scaffold. This is Reverend Samuel Marsden, the infamous “flogging parson.”

On the scaffold a NSW Corps soldier asks both men whether they would like to be blindfolded; both refuse. One of the condemned men bursts into tears, the other looks out to the crowd with a defiant expression. From the crowd Marsden calls out to the men “So, this is what your Godless life has brought you to! Your impious and deviant ways have taken you down a road that has so inevitably brought you to this appointment with the hangman that it is scarce possible to admit that even Our Saviour could have prevented it.” The priest shakes his head and turns to the hangman, apparently about to give the signal for him to pull the lever.

A long moment of silence follows, during which the more stoic of the condemned men also breaks into emotional sobs. Marsden cries out again, “But let it not be said that there is no mercy in this colony of New South Wales. Some three days ago the Governor wrote to me to state that he had accepted the pleas for clemency made by both of you. And so, rather than face your maker this day, instead you shall be taken from this place and transported to another prison, there to serve out an additional six-month term of punishment. Whilst I could have passed on this joyous news to you previously, it is my belief that this experience on the scaffold today is instructional and to the benefit of your eternal souls.”

## What the Parson Knows

After the two highly distraught convicts are removed from the scaffold, they are placed in chains and escorted away. Marsden will then happily answer any questions that the investigators pose. He knows of Reverend Fredericks, and indeed had been expecting his arrival for some weeks. Fredericks’ role was to be to tend to the spiritual needs of the convicts here in Sydney, a task for which Marsden says that he finds little time given his many other duties around the colony. His knowledge of Fredericks is limited to that which was conveyed in letters from his clerical superiors in England, who he had been petitioning for some time. He knows that Fredericks is a blind man, but also a charismatic preacher. Several of the letters suggested that “circumstances” in England had obliged the blind man to take up this post, although what those may be Marsden will not be willing to speculate.

If the investigators have made a good impression with Marsden (opposed roll of **Charm** versus his **Insight**), he will confide one further detail. Some weeks ago he received a letter which he was supposed to read to Reverend Fredericks upon his arrival. If they are willing to accompany him back to his office near Government House they may read its contents. The letter in question is dated some ten months ago and says simply:

*“Dear Reverend Fredericks,*

*The time of your appointment draws near, and you must not delay. Seek out a soldier named Rowsthorn at the barracks of Sydney; he will introduce you to those who will ease your way. Should you be unable for any reason to locate this man, you would be well advised to seek out the group of fraternal brothers that often meets in the front room of an establishment known as The Black Swan.*

*Our hopes travel with you,*

*S.”*

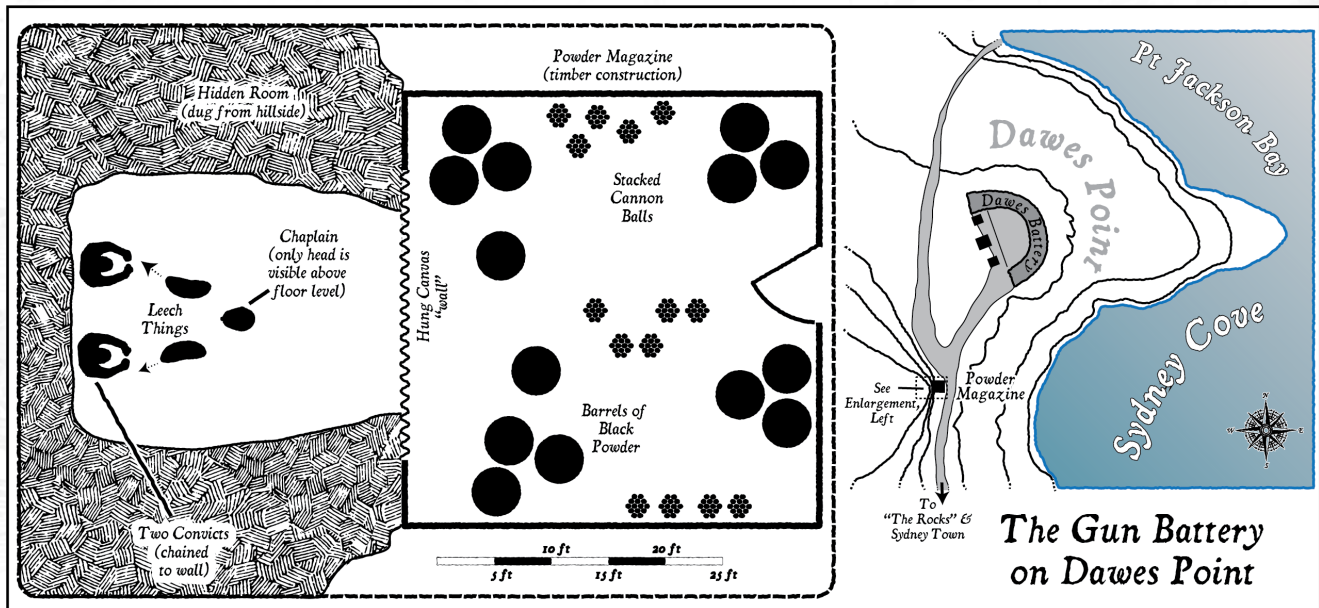
## SOLDIERS OF LOW REPUTE

If the investigators have found eye-witnesses to the arrival of the swimming chaplain at the pier in “The Rocks” they will know that an officer of the NSW Corps met him at the wharf. Alternatively they may have learned that Fredericks was supposed to contact someone named Rowsthorn in the “barracks of Sydney”. If they are interested in learning more about the identity of this mysterious man their best bet is to pay a visit to the Barracks of the NSW Corps where the man is likely to reside.

The Barracks building is a large but crudely-fashioned wooden structure which perpetually looks like it might fall down. Dozens of soldiers can be seen coming and going, all dressed in the distinctive red uniform of the British Army. For investigators who have military backgrounds, this buildings is likely to be their future home.

As soon as the investigators enter the Barracks building they will be challenged by a young fair-haired man whose corporal’s uniform looks several sizes too big for him. This young soldier will inform the investigators that the current Officer of the Watch is current predisposed. If investigators query what this means, the young





man will look embarrassed; at about the same time the investigators will hear the barely muffled sounds of human copulation coming from an adjacent room. “If you’ll just wait for a minute, sirs, I’m sure he won’t be long.”

If the investigators wait, the Officer of the Watch—a Sergeant Freeley—will emerge with an emaciated elderly female convict. The soldier’s uniform is horribly dishevelled. His breath reeks of rum. If the investigators ask him about NSW Corps officers who might have been at “The Rocks” last night, he will dismiss their question—there are lots of soldiers around the cove at all times of the day or night; it’s a dangerous place that needs protecting. If the investigators are more forceful, either succeeding in an **Intimidate** roll or suggesting that they may pass on details of Freeley’s behaviour to his superior, they can learn more. There is a roll call each morning which all NSW Corps soldiers are required to attend; checking the list from this morning shows that while several officers failed to report for roll call only one of them had a posting which would place him close to “The Rocks”. That man is Sergeant Rupert Rowsthorn and his post is protecting the Gun Battery at Dawes Point.

Investigators may ask to see Sergeant Rowsthorn’s quarters, although Freeley will state plainly that he is not authorised to let anyone enter the officer’s barracks. A **Hard Intimidate** roll or a sizeable bribe (a valuable item of jewellery or a bottle of rum) will allay any concerns. Rowsthorn’s section of the open barracks building is notably much more

Spartan than most, with the man’s few possessions arranged in a very precise, almost obsessive way. There is nothing obviously out of the ordinary, but a **Spot Hidden** roll reveals that the wooden box in which Rowsthorn keeps his clothes and bedding has a false bottom. Lifting this away reveals two curious items—a ring with a strange design and a sealed paper tube.

- **The Ring:** An **Appraise** roll suggests this is far too valuable to be owned by a mere Sergeant, being worth more than all of Rowsthorn’s other possessions combined. It bears a prominent sigil which looks like a stylised letter ‘H’ intertwined with odd iridescent bubbles.
- **The Paper Tube:** Opening the end of this tube reveals a single sheet of creamy white paper inside. It appears to be a certificate or membership document of some kind. The letterhead is an obscure design which features the same design seen on the ring. The calligraphic lettering reads “On this day, 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1792, was Brother Rupert Randolph Rowsthorn, admitted to the grade of Journeyman Beyond in the True and Sacred Order of the Heralds of the Silver Dawn.”

## The Powder Magazine

The trail of the missing chaplain and also that of Sergeant Rupert Rowsthorn leads the investigators to the headland known as Dawes Point and the Gun Battery placed at its northernmost end. This is



the location where the NSW Corps soldier brought the blind priest after meeting him in “The Rocks.” Investigators may find their way to this location either by learning of Sergeant Rowsthorn’s identity and his role as protector of the guns on Dawes Point, or by following the trail the pair took from “The Rocks” (this latter method requires a successful **Track** roll to follow the trail through to its end).

The Gun Battery is placed in a remote location overlooking Sydney Harbour. It is little more than a series of low stone walls into which five naval guns have been fitted, looking out over the water. While intended as a defensive post during times of conflict, the guns here have never been fired and the post is not typically manned. It is a quiet and desolate place.

Set back a short distance from the Gun Battery is a small windowless hut build hard up against a steep hill face. This is the Powder Magazine used to store the ammunition and black powder for firing the guns. It is the only structure anywhere close to the guns. The single door to the Powder Magazine is well-protected by a stout door and a heavy iron lock. Investigators who listen at the door of the Magazine can (with **Listen** check) hear some sounds of activity within the building. If they hammer on the door or make any conspicuous noises outside the building these sounds will greatly increase, and a subsequent **Listen** roll will allow investigators to distinguish cries for help among the various noises.

Breaking into the Magazine will require either a **Locksmith** or **Hard Mechanical Repair** roll (to defeat the lock), or some significant muscle. If trying to force the door investigators will need to succeed in an **opposed STR** roll against the door’s STR of 180; up to three investigators can combine their STR using the rules described on page 88 of the *Call of Cthulhu 7<sup>th</sup> Edition* rules.

Inside the Magazine building, the investigators will find a single dark square room, the majority of which is taken up with barrels of black powder and pyramids of stacked cannonballs. Investigators may be concerned about entering with lanterns, fearful of igniting the dozens of pounds of explosive powder stored in the stacks of barrels. In fact this is relatively unlikely unless they are especially careless – the barrels themselves are coated in a flame retardant and well-sealed. Open flames (e.g., a burning torch) still present a danger.

There are no people present within the room, however if investigators have previously heard sounds of activity they can still discern those emerging from the western side of the room, the part of the building directly adjacent to the hillside. Inspecting the “wall” along this side of the room reveals that unlike the others it is not of wooden construction but actually a large piece of canvas. Pulling this aside reveals a void beyond – an excavation into the earth of the hillside. The investigators can make the same discovery through a **Spot Hidden** roll.

The canvas partition can easily be moved granting access to a small pitch-black space beyond. To see anything of what follows the investigators will need to bring their own source of illumination.

## DEATH OF A CHAPLAIN

The first feature that the investigators will notice in the clammy earthen “room” is the pair of convicts chained to the furthest wall. As soon as these poor wretches see the investigators they break into a cacophony of shouting. Despite this cacophony, however, the investigators’ attention is likely to be drawn to the other curious feature within the room: the head in the floor. In the very centre of the earthen floor is a section which someone has recently dug out and filled back in, leaving a vertically-standing human figure mostly buried with just his head emerging above floor level. The face of the buried figure is unique and possibly familiar to the investigators – its wizened skin and clenched eyelids mark it out as belonging to Reverend Elijah Fredericks.

Of the NSW Corps soldier who brought the chaplain to this place, there is no sign.

The buried chaplain is still alive, although obviously close to death. As the investigators enter the room he speaks a few garbled words including “Lied to me! May they rot in Hell!” He then gives a loud cry of pain and his neck goes slack, leaving his face suspended mere inches above the soil.

## RISE OF THE WATCHER SPAWN

Moments after the apparent death of Reverend Fredericks, investigators witness a much more alarming transformation. Somewhere deep within the skull of the chaplain they hear a loud reverberating CRACK followed shortly by a second identical noise. Glowing yellow liquid begins to





ooze forth from the eye sockets of the dead priest, staining the earth around his buried body with a horrible sickly ichor. Then both of his eye sockets erupt as larger, more solid objects force themselves out from within. At first these look like lumps of the same yellow ichor, but quickly it becomes apparent that these grapefruit-sized masses are a peculiar kind of living creature. The two beasts resemble leeches, but with tentacles and a toothy maw. Investigators must make a Sanity roll (3/1D8) to witness this disgusting birth.

Unless the investigators are particularly decisive the newly-hatched Watcher Spawns will sense the chained convicts, which are a mere 6 feet (2 metres) from where the priest was buried. These chained figures were obviously intended to be captive food for the hatchlings, and the beasts will happily take this easy meal. Launching themselves across the room with alarming speed, the leech-like creatures literally burrow into the defenceless convicts, killing them instantly and leaving a fine spray of blood as they chew through bone and sinew. Each convict is consumed in just a few rounds. The Watcher Spawn will then go dormant for a short time, lurking within the corpses of their victims.

The beasts need this time to absorb blood from the corpses, and as they do so they grow at an alarming rate. After just a minute the investigators will see the bodies of the dead convicts bloat and twitch horribly as though something large was pulsating inside it. Shortly afterwards, the two post-feed Watcher Spawns – each now the size of a person – burst forth from the plundered corpses, hungrier than ever. If the investigators are still present in the Powder Magazine they will certainly be the targets of this pair of ravenous horrors.

If the investigators somehow manage to attack the Watcher Spawn before they have fed they will be far easier adversaries to defeat. However the circumstances of the hatching will make this difficult to achieve. Defeating the two post-feed Watcher Spawn will present a difficult combat for most investigator groups, particularly if only a few have firearms.

## SCORCHED EARTH

Clever investigators will make use of the fact that the entire building is a literal powder keg – the Magazine building contains enough black powder to blow up everything in a 20 yard radius. Of course



the investigators will still need a way of igniting it, ideally without killing themselves at the same time. Keepers should reward clever plans to lock the leech creatures inside the Magazine and blow the place to Kingdom Come. In determining the damage caused by such an explosion, the following rule of thumb applies: it takes 8 rounds to pry open a barrel of black powder and safely set a fuse which will give the investigators enough time to run clear of the explosion. Investigators can skip steps if time is pressing (and it probably will be, since bloodthirsty demon leeches are flying around inside the building in search of their blood). However, cutting corners risks the explosion damaging the investigators. The table below summarises the consequences – note that it takes a minimum of 2 rounds to set off an explosion.

<i>Rounds of preparation</i>	<i>Consequence to investigators when explosion occurs</i>
8+	None.
6-7	Each investigator must make a <b>Luck</b> roll or suffer 2D6 Hit Points damage
4-5	Each investigator must make a <b>Luck</b> roll: failure delivers 5D6 Hit Points, success still delivers 2D6 damage
2-3	Each investigator must make a <b>Luck</b> roll: failure results in instant death; success results in 4D6 Hit Points

Any explosion will obliterate the Powder Magazine and kill anything still inside the building. Beyond that, anyone close to the explosion will suffer damage equal to 20D6 minus 1D6 for each yard of distance from the point of explosion.

## Rewards and Loose Ends

If the investigators defeat both of the Watcher Spawn they gain +1D8 SAN.

If they saved one or both of the convicts chained in the Powder Magazine they gain an additional +1D3 SAN.

Depending on how the scenario played out, the investigators may have a significant amount of explaining to do to the Colonial Secretary. If there is no evidence that the missing chaplain was found – for example if his remains were incinerated in an explosion – it will be difficult for the investigators

to entirely clear their name. To the authorities it still looks like they are quarantine-breakers.

Fortunately, the removal of the alien influence from the two ships means that the weird illness quickly abates. Within a week, all signs of the strange yellow scabs have disappeared from convicts, passengers and crew and the two ships are permitted entry to the Government Wharf at Sydney.

There are still several questions left unanswered:

- Who are the Heralds of the Silver Dawn? And what is their connection with the alien horrors that hatched in the Powder Magazine? What plan did the group have to bind and collect the Watcher Spawn after they had hatched? What place did they wish to have guarded by these occult monstrosities? How will the group react once their smuggling scheme has been foiled?
- What happened to Sergeant Rowsthorn, the agent of the Heralds who mysteriously disappeared after burying the body in the Magazine? Does he ever go back to his berth in the NSW Corps Barracks, or does he flee into the bush to try to eke out a living? Or is he being hidden by the Heralds somewhere else within the colony? Or elsewhere ... perhaps even in another dimension?
- What is the significance of the curious ring owned by Sergeant Rowsthorn? If the investigators somehow retrieved the body of the Reverend from beneath the floor of the Powder Magazine they will find that he wore a similar item – could this unusual piece of jewellery denote membership of some secret group?
- Who are the “group of fraternal brothers” which meet regularly in the front room of the Black Swan tavern, according to the mysterious letter intended for the ill-fated Reverend Fredericks?

Creative Keepers are invited to use these loose ends as a vehicle for creating future scenarios of their own devising.



## Statistics

### WATCHER SPAWN, GIANT LEECH HORRORS

Watcher Spawns are horrific servitors from beyond the stars, sometimes used by Mythos-aware cults and sorcerers to guard important locations or items.

Watcher Spawns resemble gigantic bloated leeches with three thick ropy tentacles and an enormous and tooth-filled maw. Their black hides glisten with putrid-smelling toxin, and the beasts' hundreds of razor-sharp teeth can literally shred a human body in a matter of moments. The leech-things are blind but otherwise have excellent senses, making them deadly predators.

The life-cycle of the alien leeches is largely unknown but occultists have discovered that larval or egg-bound young of the race can be incubated within a mammalian body. When they hatch, the new-born horrors are small – little more than the size of melon – but extremely hungry for blood. They begin life by devouring the host that carried them, and any other mammalian life it can detect. After it has fully fed for the first time (a process which only takes a few minutes) the hatchling swells alarmingly in size to become approximately the dimensions of a human being. Over the next several feedings the Watcher Spawn will continue to grow until it reaches its final adult size which is about the same as a hippopotamus.

The two Watcher Spawns in this scenario have identical statistics; they begin as newly-hatched but unless the investigators can stop them feeding on the chained convicts they will quickly progress to the post-first-feed size.

### Special Attacks

- *Paralysing Venom:* any target struck by one of the Watcher Spawn's tentacles will be injected with a venom which does no damage but which can paralyse prey. Affected individuals must make an **opposed CON** roll versus the Paralyse skill of the Watcher. If the target's CON roll is a worse result, he or she is fully paralysed for 1D6 hours.

- *Leeching Bite:* The standard tactic employed by the Watcher Spawn is to paralyse a target then draw it into its toothy maw. The leech-like mouth fastens onto the chest of a victim, its teeth tearing through clothing and flesh. The creature's ultimate goal is the blood of its prey. Damage from a successful bite is initially the beast's Damage Bonus plus 3 hit points, but the greater damage comes from the blood-sucking that occurs on each subsequent round. As long as the Watcher Spawn remains attached, the prey loses 1D3 × 5 STR each round.

### NEWLY HATCHED WATCHER

STR 50 CON 40 SIZ 15 DEX 80 INT 25

POW 65 Hit Points: 5

Damage bonus: -1 Build: -1 Move: 16 Magic Points: 13

#### ATTACKS

Attacks per round: 1

Tentacle 50% (25/10), damage 1D6 + Paralysis (see above)

Bite 40% (20/8), damage 3 + Damage Bonus + Blood Drain (see above)

Dodge 40% (22/7)

Armour: 3 points of rubbery hide; regenerates 1 hit point per round; immune to fire.

Skills: Paralyse 55%

Sanity Loss: 3/1D8 to witness the hatching of a Watcher.

### POST FIRST-FEED WATCHERS

STR 80 CON 70 SIZ 60 DEX 40 INT 25

POW 65 Hit Points: 13

Damage bonus: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 8 Magic Points: 13

#### ATTACKS

Attacks per round: 2

Tentacle 50% (25/10), damage 1D6 + Paralysis (see above)

Bite 40% (20/8), damage 3 + Damage Bonus + Blood Drain (see above)

Dodge 40% (22/7)

Armour: 3 points of rubbery hide; regenerates 1 hit point per round; immune to fire.

Skills: Paralyse 50%

Sanity Loss: 3/1D8 to see a partially-grown Watcher Spawn.



## ADULT WATCHERS

STR 140 CON 120 SIZ 180 DEX 20 INT 25  
 POW 65 Hit Points: 30  
 Damage bonus: +3D6 Build: 4 Move: 5 Magic Points: 13

### ATTACKS

Attacks per round: 3

Tentacle 50% (25/10), damage 1D6 + Paralysis (see above)  
 Bite 40% (20/8), damage 3 + Damage Bonus +  
 Blood Drain (see above)  
 Dodge 40% (22/7)

Armour: 3 points of rubbery hide; regenerates 1 hit point per round; immune to fire.

Skills: Paralyse 45%

Sanity Loss: 3/1D8 to see a fully-grown Watcher.

## Story Seeds

There are many different types of horror story that an inventive Keeper could base in the convict-era of early Australia. Below are just a few story seeds which might serve as inspiration, each provided with multiple different variant versions.

### Seed 1: The Ghosts of Vinegar Hill

This story seed features action set primarily in Parramatta and Coal River convict settlement. It only makes sense to run it after the Castle Hill convict uprising of 1804 has occurred (and its perpetrators have been punished). This places the story either in the late days of the Rum Economy, sometime during Bligh's tenure as Governor, or after the Rum Rebellion.

### BACKGROUND

As described in the Parramatta Gazetteer, the "Battle of Vinegar Hill" marked the end of the short-lived Castle Hill rebellion. The conflict took place on an isolated hill to the north of Parramatta, near the farmstead of the eccentric Frenchman Baron Verrincourt de Clambe. For most people – convicts, settlers and soldiers alike – the incident is little more than an unpleasant memory. But now, months or years after the muskets felled the

leaders of the convict uprising, stories have begun to emerge of people seeing strange night-time lights up on Vinegar Hill. Nobody seems to know who or what might be up on the isolated hill after dark. And as for the strange and unexplained noises ... well, even those who have lived in the area for years are scratching their head.

## THE TRUTH

Three options are presented as possible explanations:

1. *The Ghosts in the Hill:* The mound known by Europeans as "Vinegar Hill" is a location associated with a local Aboriginal tale associated with the great spirit-father Baiame who it is said made the place to preserve the memories of great heroes and their deeds (and in whose memories offerings should be left on the hill). This story – in a much muddled form – was something that the rebel Phillip Cunningham learned from an Aboriginal man who served as a convict in the Castle Hill camp. By Phillip's superstitious Irish viewpoint, this meant that the hill was a "good luck" place and somewhere he could bury the silver coins that Irish nationalists had smuggled to the colony to back his uprising. By his reckoning, such an action would bring great fortune upon his rebellious undertaking – the fact that he lay dead a day later proved this untrue. But, like many of the Aboriginal stories and songs, the song of Baiame's heroes does have a life of its own ... and inadvertently Phillip's "offering" of the precious metals has allowed his memory to join the legions of Aboriginal heroes whose ghostly forms return from Alcheringa on special nights to roam Vinegar Hill. Until the silver coins have either been removed from their hiding place or have corroded away (something that will take centuries) the hill will be home to occasional manifestations and perhaps even the escape of more horrific entities from the Dreaming.
2. *The Occult Treasury:* By some unlikely means, Irish upstart Phillip Cunningham received a great and powerful occult gift from his family and supporters back home – something they hoped would guide him to make wise decisions. This treasure was a strange and impossibly-ancient set of silver coins, known by some as the Treasure of Vorvadoss. These odd coins had the property of being able to "talk" to their



owner, advising him of the most prudent course of action to adopt. To receive their wisdom all one needed to do was contemplate a question, pick up some of the coins and cast them onto the ground. In the tinkling, clattering sounds, voices would be audible. These voices would provide supernaturally prescient wisdom. Unfortunately, Phillip Cunningham was too much caught up in his own dreams of rebellion to listen to what the Treasure of Vorvadoss had to tell him (they advised him to bide his time). So he buried them on Vinegar Hill not long after he had staged his convict uprising, with the plan of using them for money when his new "empire" was established. This did not come to pass. But the buried coins—like many items of great occult power—do not rest easily in the ground. Instead they call out to men by way of curious sounds and visions, in an effort to be rediscovered. So far, only a stray few have been unearthed.

3. *Mundane Treasure-Hunters*: If using this option, the lights and sounds are not supernatural in origin at all but rather the glow of lanterns and curses of men up on Vinegar hill after dark. It is only the uncommon clarity of the night air, and fearful superstitions of locals that makes either seem in any way unnatural. The night-time diggers are hunting for a stash of treasure that common legend suggests was buried by the Irish convict rebels just before the final battle where they were all killed. The story must have some basis in fact—after all a few of the coins have been found accidentally. Unwilling to share this valuable find, a pair of Parramatta locals (the Keeper can decide who) have now taken it upon themselves to make nightly forays up onto Vinegar Hill in the hope that they can unearth this treasure and keep it for themselves.

## GETTING THE INVESTIGATORS INVOLVED

There are a number of potential on-ramps via which the Keeper can introduce investigators to the mystery of Vinegar Hill:

- Rumours are circulating around the hotels of Parramatta: farmers whose properties back onto "Vinegar Hill" are reporting strange lights and sounds seen late at night up on the hill.

- Investigators visiting the Freemason's Arms—the most popular pub in Parramatta—might notice behind the bar, an unusual display of three large silver coins nailed to the wall. Even from a distance it's obvious that these are most definitely not British currency or Spanish Dollars, nor any other coinage familiar to the colony. Questions directed at the publican, James Larra, might eventually uncover an unusual tale—these curious coins were found up at Toongabbie not long after the Irish rebel leaders were put down by the redcoats. People have been seeing strange things there ever since.
- A strange man has recently arrived in Sydney town asking questions about Phillip Cunningham and a fortune in silver that he obtained by deceptive means; this cowed and close-mouthed figure wants to learn more about the events surrounding the Castle Hill rebellion, and might accept help from the investigators if they don't ask too many questions.

## INVESTIGATIONS

- Questions around Parramatta reveal that while most free settlers and soldiers put no stock in superstitious stories about lights and sounds on Vinegar Hill, many of the local convicts are certain that the weird phenomena are real. Most say that the lights are the souls of those brave Irish fighters for freedom cruelly killed back in '04.
- Looking into the strange coins fixed behind the bar at the Freemason's Arms reveals them to be quite remarkable. They are thin, expertly cast and bear an unusual head—something that looks more like a Roman emperor than a modern-day monarch. Yet the coins are obviously of recent origin. The only words they bear are "Republic of New Ireland". Anyone who has a background in Metallurgy can easily tell that they are made of Sterling Silver and probably quite valuable.
- There aren't many avenues in Parramatta to investigate the circumstances of the 1804 uprising—most convicts who were close to the rebel leadership back in 1804 are either dead or were sent to Coal River. Questions about the key players in the rebellion and



their motives will almost certainly end with the investigators being directed to pay a visit to Coal River to track down one of the survivors.

- While she does a good job at hiding the fact, one of the convict girls who works at Elizabeth Farm – Molly Rowson – was actually the sweetheart of the man who led the Castle Hill rebellion. If asked, Rowson can tell investigators that there is only one man still alive who might know the truth behind the final days of Cunningham and the other rebel leaders. That man is Edward Nail, currently sentenced to the mine at Coal River.
- Anybody questioning the convicts at Coal River will find them to be unhelpful, most questions being met with silence. Most of the men who are there have felt more than a few lashes as reward for speaking out. But with a bit of bribery or persuasion, some of the men might mention rumours of a cursed “pile o’ silver” that rebel leader Phillip Cunningham was said to possess. A few might recall talk that the treasure was sent out by some unknown benefactor back in Ireland to help in establishing a free Irish state on Australian soil, although most of the convicts think that’s just a hopeful legend.
- If Edward Nail can be located, his knowledge of Cunningham’s silver is superior to anyone else’s – in fact he claims that he knows where the cursed coins are buried. The catch is that Nail will only agree to disclose what he knows if they investigators agree to either break him out of Coal River, or arrange a ticket of leave. If they do so they find Nail to be a highly unreliable liability, trying to escape from their custody at every possible juncture.
- Investigators who venture up onto Vinegar Hill at night can experience the phenomenon first hand, if the Keeper so wishes. This could involve some kind of supernatural encounter, or perhaps simply the discovery of some covert treasure-hunting, depending on which of the options the Keeper is using.

## Seed 2: The Lights of Botany Bay

This story seed begins in Sydney and involves a short (but eventful) trip to explore the region around Botany Bay to the south. It could be run during any part of the *Convicts & Cthulhu* era.

### BACKGROUND

Botany Bay is the name given the large shallow inlet some 8 miles (13 km) to the south of Sydney town. It was named by Captain James Cook who landed there in 1770 on the *Endeavour*’s famous voyage of discovery. Cook’s expedition spent considerable time at Botany Bay, allowing its Royal Society scientists (under the leadership of Joseph Banks) to study the many strange animals and plants that were endemic to this new land. It also allowed Cook to witness the local Aboriginal population and to record accounts of human sacrifices they made out on the coral reefs of the bay. On his return to England, both Cook and Banks recommended that Botany Bay should be the site of a British colony. But it was not to be: when the First Fleet of convict ships arrived under command of soon-to-be-Governor Arthur Phillips a decision was made that Botany Bay was an unsuitable location for a settlement due to its marshy foreshore and lack of fresh water. The colony was instead founded at Port Jackson to the north, a decision that was precipitated by the discovery that a French ship (commanded by the Comte de Lapérouse) was lurking around Botany Bay.

The events of Cooks, Banks, Phillips and Lapérouse are now distant memories and Botany Bay is nothing more than a surveyed waterway on the maps of the New South Wales colony. But a strange arrival in Sydney is about to change that. Almost immediately upon disembarking from the American free trader *Stellar* the wizened but wiry form of the old man attracts attention and invited gossip. Of indeterminate age and dressed in heavy black robes, he travels alone and gives only the name “Solander” – in a curious accent – to those who query. Solander’s purpose in the colony of New South Wales slowly becomes apparent. A few days later – after several closed-door meetings between the hunchbacked man and the colonial Governor – a formal order was given that a group shall be assembled for a short expedition to Botany Bay. The





newcomer to New South Wales – apparently someone of significant wealth or importance (although precise details are vague) – has some information gleaned from the writings of Joseph Banks which suggest a singular and valuable discovery of value to His Majesty might be found there. Rumours filter through both the NSW Corps and the convicts: hints that this black-robed emissary is an agent of the King, or a powerful Lord, or perhaps the Devil himself. In spite of all these dark whisperings, the preparations for Solander's trek to Botany Bay are swift. The man seems most desperate to reach the site before the night of the next New Moon. The Governor has called for volunteers from among the NSW Corps to protect the scientific voyage – a call quickly taken up by Lt Paulson, who has undertaken to lead the military contingent.

## GETTING THE INVESTIGATORS INVOLVED

The easiest way to get investigators involved is to have them assigned to Solander's expedition. Soldiers of the NSW Corps can either volunteer for the task or (more likely) just be ordered to accompany Lt Paulson. Similarly convict investigations can be among the small crew of convict labourers requisitioned to do all the heavy labour on the trip, including clearing the roadway ahead of its horses. Aboriginal investigators might be engaged by the military men (or even the Governor) as local guides to both navigate the area and also "make peace" with any native groups encountered. Free settlers or ticket-of-leave convicts probably have less reason to get involved with the Solander mission, but those who have any knowledge of the area or have distinguished themselves as "men of learning" might get asked along because of their experience. Others might get involved because of the hints that the expedition aims to unearth something of "immense value."

## INVESTIGATIONS

- Questions around Sydney Town will quickly reveal the basic information about Botany Bay described in the background section above. Asking around amongst less-scholarly (i.e., more superstitious) folks might also elicit some wild stories about their being "weird glowing forms" that can sometimes be witnessed near the shores of Botany Bay – some folks even claim that the ghostly glowing forms include Lapérouse's ship, the *Astrolabe*.



- Any Aboriginal investigators might know something of the local traditions of the peoples who live around Botany Bay – the Bidjigal and Gweagal clans. Alternatively, any investigator that tries to speak with Aboriginal peoples from those communities will find them generally helpful, if a little suspicious of people asking about "strange lights" or similar. The local traditions describe a place on the southern banks of the bay where sometimes – on the nights where there is no moon in the sky – the ancestors hold their corroboree with lots of coloured fires. Everybody knows to keep well clear.
- Nobody around Sydney knows much about the strange old man, "Solander", who recently arrived. If investigators ask among learned men – say the colony's doctors or lawyers – they may find someone who can recall that the name Solander had some connection with Cook's crew on the *Endeavour*. Searching through colonial records will easily find mention of a Dr. Daniel Solander as being an important scientific member of that expedition, and a close associate of Royal Society president Joseph Banks. Other papers, perhaps harder to track down, record that Dr. Solander died of a stroke in 1782.
- Asking the old man about his name or his connection to the Dr. Solander of the *Endeavour* crew is an exercise in futility – he simply provides no information beyond that which underscores the need for urgency in organising his trek to Botany Bay. He is a literal blank canvas.



## CONVICTS & CTHULHU

- If investigators take it upon themselves to ransack the meagre belongings of the old man in search of clues, they will find one intriguing document – an unexpurgated version of Banks’ hand-written notes about his survey of the flora and fauna of Botany Bay during Cook’s expedition. This account includes mention of a strange encounter with some odd and unexplained lights on the shore. The account includes a map which clearly marks the location they believed to be the source of these “unfamiliar luminescences” as well as a record that Dr. Solander and his associate Herman Spöring volunteered to investigate.
  - Any investigators who are suspicious of the unusual willingness of one of the NSW Corps officers to volunteer for the expedition might do some background checking about Lt Paulson. Questioning his fellow officers doesn’t reveal too much about him, but a search of the colonial records might reveal something of interest: Paulson has some powerful connections back in England. For more than a decade Paulson served on the personal staff of John Montagu, the 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Sandwich and First Lord of the Admiralty. The close association continued even after Montagu retired from public office in 1782. Paulson’s posting to the NSW colony began in 1792 shortly after the death of his patron and the official records of the colony include personal letters of recommendation from Montagu as well as Banks. With such powerful friends it is surprising that Paulson occupies only a middle-rank within the colony and has not drawn more attention.
  - Snooping through Paulson’s personal belongings reveals other papers from the Earl of Sandwich dated 1792, which seem to be coded orders to conduct certain spying missions directly for the Lord. One of the objectives outlined in these papers from Sandwich is the reporting of any persons expressing a particular interest in Botany Bay. Paulson is ordered to send any information he gleans back to “The Brotherhood.”
1. *The City on the Bay*: If using this option, the place encountered by Banks on Botany Bay is one of those rare places where the barriers between our reality and others are weak enough that the weird alien city of Carcosa can be dimly seen. This strange alien place, strongly associated with The King In Yellow and Hastur, has a corrosive and corrupting influence on everything it touches and this holds true for the isolated part of Botany Bay indicated on Banks’ map. If visited at the right time of the lunar cycle, under the correct conditions, this otherwise unremarkable spot is transformed into a fantastic and surreal vision. At first those witnessing the manifestation might notice that the waters of the bay have become suddenly much calmer than they remember. The dark waves are replaced by an almost perfectly still surface, clear and reflective – almost like a perfect mirror. Anybody who looks on this sight for more than a moment will see that the reflection in the water bears little resemblance to the Australian bushland, but instead shows a blurred and lambent reflection of the spires and towers of an impossibly tall city. Looking upwards at the shore reveals that impossibly, the bushland is gone and the city from the reflection now occupies the waters’ edge. Those who have allowed their experience of the vision to proceed this far can actually walk physically into Carcosa and experience its alien and surreal vistas.

When the scientific expedition from the *Endeavour* passed through Botany Bay in 1770 they chanced upon this weird place. Joseph Banks was wary but his associate Dr Daniel Solander was entranced and insisted on being allowed to explore. The Swede paddled to the shores of Carcosa, accompanied by his assistant Herman Spöring. The two returned an hour later – or at least two things returned that looked just like Solander and Spöring. It didn’t take a scientist to tell that whatever these things were, they weren’t men, despite their stilted efforts to mimic the speech and behaviour of the men whose shapes they wore. Banks in particular was horrified, but ultimately his curiosity overcame his fear and he studied the things that returned from Carcosa. Both seemed ill-equipped to function in this world, their biological processes being somehow different to normal terrestrial life. The thing that looked like Spöring didn’t survive

### THE TRUTH

Three options are presented as possible explanations for the mysterious Solander’s mission:



long, dying a few weeks later as the *Endeavour* made its return voyage to England (after being wrecked for weeks on the Great Barrier Reef). The thing that looked like Solander seemed to adapt better, and with some help from Banks it was able to fit back into normal society despite the curious changes that wracked its body from time to time. Eventually, however, Banks and “Solander” agreed that it would be easier if the latter disappeared from public view – Banks arranged for a fake death and autopsy papers to legally remove him from society. This freed “Solander” to travel and study not only the new world he found himself in, but also the odd ways in which this reality touches his own. Now, some years later, “Solander” has decided that he needs to go home – back to Lost Carcosa – before his earthly body finally gives up the ghost. But that requires going back to Botany Bay and once again finding the gateway to the alien city.

2. *The Time Fragments*: If using this option, the old wizened “Solander” is not only the namesake of the Swedish scientist who accompanied Banks in 1770, he is actually a fragment of the essence of that very man. At the place on Botany Bay marked on Banks’ map there stands a peculiar kind of rip in the fabric of space-time, perhaps a legacy of some long ago temporal detonation. To the naked eye it seems like a haze of ill-defined lights, but it is actually a unique and bizarre “wrinkle” in reality. When the two scientists encountered the phenomenon it was the Swede who volunteered to walk into the glowing rings of illumination – and that contact changed him in a quite unique way. Solander’s reality was splintered into five fragments, each scattered through time and flung to some different corner of the globe. Strangely, all five Solander’s still shared a common mind but each only possessed one of their original senses.

One Solander-fragment (the one with perfect hearing but feeble in all other senses) found himself in Bengal; the year was 1784. This Solander – driven slowly mad by the visions and other senses that constantly bombarded it from other times and places – found his way back to England. There he met up with his colleague Banks, who had long ago returned from the voyage to Australia, and who was most surprised to see him. Banks had no memory

of the temporal “wrinkle” on Botany Bay and instead told Solander of a history in which the Swede had returned safely with Banks and gone on to a distinguished career before dying of a stroke in 1782. The two men of science were baffled and spent many long nights poring over scientific volumes in an effort to resolve the mystery. In the end it was an encounter with a mysterious stranger and his worm-riddled copy of an old book (*The Necronomicon*) that provided some understanding of what had happened to Solander. The foul tome also offered some hope to the Solander-fragment, for it described a blood-ritual that could be performed to forever destroy the “wrinkle” in time. All he needs to do is travel to New South Wales, locate the place and sacrifice six “begrimed” souls by spilling their blood. According to the writings of *The Mad Arab* this will reverse the splintering of Daniel Solander and return him to the history that Banks remembers.

3. *The Axis of Suffering*: If using this option, the place marked by Banks on his map of Botany Bay is important not because of something that is there, but something that should have been there. Namely, the penal colony settlement, whose founding was an important part of a vast plan which links nine places around the globe as pieces in a huge occult “machine.” The Industrious Brothers of the New World are the architects of an audacious and far-reaching conspiracy, the ultimate goal of which is to bring a foul alien god (known only as the Red Queen) to subjugate those European nations who oppose the British Empire. This mad scheme has been in progress for close to a century, and central to its success is the foundation of a series of “places of suffering” at key geomantic node points around the globe. The installation of a cruel and tyrannical penal settlement on the node point at Botany Bay was to be the creation of the last segment of this world-wide summoning grid.

As with all great occult conspiracies, the plans of the Industrious Brothers were not without their detractors. Banks and Cook – both puppets of John Montagu, 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Sandwich and key player in the cult – strongly advocated for settlement at Botany Bay, but the decisions and actions of Arthur Phillip somehow stymied their well-thought-out plans.



Whether Phillip acted as a free agent or was directed by some other Mythos cult or faction remains a mystery (as does the part played by Lapérouse). In the case of the Governor, the cult was to get its revenge upon him in the form of a baleful illness bestowed upon him by magickal methods some years later. But the missing “node of suffering” at Botany Bay remains a problem for the Industrious Brothers, one that grows more and more pressing as the time for their summoning of the Red Queen draws near. As a last ditch effort to rescue their grand plan, the group sent a capable lone agent – a sorcerer who masks his power under his ancient looks and heavy robes. Aided by their spy in the NSW Corps, Lt. Paulson, this mysterious traveller’s task is to travel to the appointed location on Botany Bay accompanied by a group of willing assistants. Thereafter the sorcerer will use his potent spells at the appointed time to turn the place momentarily into a “place of suffering” by whatever means necessary.

## Seed 3: Ghosts of the North

This seed takes place in and around Sydney during the winter months. For maximum historical accuracy this should be set during June 1807, when the Russian sloop *Neva* visited the fledgling colony. However, if the Keeper wishes to run it during an earlier time, a fictional ship of a similar type could easily be substituted for the *Neva*.

### BACKGROUND

It is winter in the convict settlement and the spirits of both the convicts and the free men have been assailed by bone-chilling blizzards, the worst weather that anyone can recall. Even the novelty of a group of visiting Russians – the crew of a ship called the *Neva* – does little to raise people’s mood. Things take a turn for the worse, however, when a series of grisly deaths come to light. At first the victims are members of the visiting Russian crew, but soon the rampage of violent slayings has expanded to include both convicts and NSW Corps soldiers. Soon, everybody in the colony is watching over their shoulders, fearful that they will be the next to be torn limb from limb and left bleeding on the cold, muddy ground.

## GETTING THE INVESTIGATORS INVOLVED

If the investigators are government officials or soldiers, they will likely become involved through orders from the Governor that an end must be put to these brutal slayings. Convict investigators or Aboriginal investigators could become involved when someone close to them is taken as a victim, or they may be assigned to someone charged with solving the mystery. If the Keeper wishes to run this seed as a one-shot scenario, conceivably the investigators may all be members of the Russian crew of the *Neva* who are desperate to find out who is slaying their numbers as they take shore leave in this strange place.

## INVESTIGATIONS

- The slayings have all the hallmarks of violent animal attacks, but have all taken place in heavily-settled parts of Sydney where no large animals would ever normally venture. The bodies have literally been torn limb from limb, with bones and viscera left in a broad circular pattern some ten-feet across.
- Asking around Sydney for anyone who has experienced similar attacks elsewhere in the new colony will attract a few vague stories about “woolly men” seen in the high mountains to the west, but few hard facts.
- Looking into the details of the visiting Russian ship will quickly establish some basic information. The *Neva* is a ship of the Russian Navy but has been chartered by the Russian-American Company, a private trading company that administers Russian land holdings in Alaska. The company is controlled by the government, but the crew have been hired on from a number of ports around Russia and Europe.
- The crew of the *Neva* was relatively small – there were five officers, a ship’s surgeon, a Commissioner in the Russian-American Company and 36 sailors. Six of the sailors and one of the officers has been slain already.
- The stated purpose of the *Neva*’s visit to Sydney was simply to stock up on provisions as they transit from the Pacific to Indian Oceans; Russia has no formal relationship with the colonies of Australia and indeed no Russian ship has ever visited the continent before.





- If the investigators talk to the frightened crew, they can learn the recent travels of the *Neva*. Prior to coming to Australia they had spent some time stopped at a number of small Pacific islands although their last major stop was in Alaska.
- Besides the seven Russians that have been killed, the NSW Corps have recorded four deaths around Sydney of convicts and soldiers, each of which has the same hallmarks as the Russian deaths. One was a convict who was separated from a work gang on Dawes Point for just a few minutes; another was a drunken soldier who left the NSW Corps barracks in search of entertainment.

## THE TRUTH

Three options are presented as possible explanations behind the rash of brutal slayings:

1. *Curse of the Shaman:* If using this option, one of the Russian sailors aboard the *Neva* has a terrible secret – back in Alaska he ran afoul of an indigenous tribe after defiling one of their ceremonial places. The local shaman of the tribe placed a curse on the

man, something which had no obvious effect at the time but is now creating havoc. The cursed sailor, Rudi Gorelov, bears the mark of the Wendigo: any time he makes landfall in a place which is experiencing winter, the supernatural force will track him down. June is winter in the Southern Hemisphere, so the arrival of the *Neva* in Sydney has not only triggered the terrible blizzard-like weather but also summoned the Wendigo to hunt and kill anyone Rudi has made contact with. Looking into the pattern of the deaths will quickly establish that they are all linked, and that link is Rudi Gorelov, who has taken to hiding himself away (at least partly to protect those around him). Investigations will eventually reveal that the sailor at the heart of the problem is more victim than villain. However when the investigators finally track him down he claims he has not the courage to kill himself, but whoever kills him takes on his curse. The investigators can use some Russian books on the ship for research, or invent their own way to fight and dispel the Wendigo. (Keepers may decide this is defeating the Wendigo in combat, or summoning it and defeating it in a magical battle, or some other solution).



2. *The Black Powder Plot:* If using this option, the brutal deaths around Sydney are actually the work of a most unlikely murderer – a small, anaemic-looking woman called Sarah Molloy. Sarah is wife to one the men responsible for tending to the government stores in warehouses around Sydney. Unbeknownst to anyone – even her husband – Sarah Molloy has only a loose grasp on sanity, thanks largely to a horrific attack she witnessed as a child when her father and mother were cut down before her eyes by an insane Russian monk. Molloy’s mental stability has not been improved by the three years of harsh treatment she has received at the hands of her husband in New South Wales. All the hatred that has been building inside her flooded to the fore when she heard news of the arrival of the Russian ship *Neva* – in her deluded mind it is this crew who murdered her family back in London in 1778. While Sarah Molloy is a petite and weak thing she is not without resources, the greatest of which is a copy of the key to the Colonial storehouses. Using this she has quietly stolen supplies of two very useful resources, rum and black powder. These have become the tools of her murderous trade: first she plies her victim with enough rum that they fall into a stupor then she packs the body with several small metal balls she has filled with black powder and a short fuse. The results are the spectacularly gory scenes that have been discovered recently around Sydney Town. The problem for Sarah is that now that her mind has been broken, she can’t stop – first it was just Russians she wanted to kill, then it was anybody who she believed had laughed at her behind her back. Can it be long before her husband is the subject of her cruel ministrations?
3. *A Time To Fear:* If using this option, the visit by the Russians to Australia was not a chance event at all but part of a carefully-orchestrated plan (possibly backed by the Russian government) which has sadly gone off the rails. Before leaving Alaska some months ago the crew of the *Neva* was augmented with a very curious individual, a man known only as Solonik who took on the role as ship’s surgeon despite having only slight knowledge of medicine yet an encyclopaedic knowledge of the occult. The captain of the *Neva* was told that it was imperative that Solonik be transported to the colony on the new-found

continent of New Holland. Unknown to the captain, Solonik’s mission is the culmination of several years of research into obscure Cthulhu Mythos tomes held in Russian libraries and in private collections. One of the gems to come out of that research is an intriguing note discovered in an annotated version of the Pnakotic Manuscript which describes a unique rock formation in a “Dark Southern Continent” which is home to a “power of such potency that it could lay low a kingdom.” The Russian researcher found strong similarities between the described formation and unusual rocks noted in the second account of the New South Wales colony published by Lt. Col. David Collins and depicted in an engraving entitled “Natives under a rock in bad weather.” Solonik carries with him copies of both the Collins volume and the Mythos tome and hoped that between them they would lead him to his prize. As insane as the plan sounds, it worked – the instructions in the Pnakotic Manuscript led the Russian occultist directly to an ancient site where many millions of years ago a Hound of Tindalos was imprisoned behind perfectly smooth rocks. Unfortunately the small chisel marks Solonik’s created to test the potency of the stone had the effect of creating a small but significant angle in the rock. That was enough to permit the beast to escape. Solonik was the first to be shredded by its incandescent rage, but the anger of the long-imprisoned creature could not be slaked by just one death.

## Seed 4: The Baleful Flood

This seed takes place around the settled areas of the Hawkesbury River; it can take place at any time in the era although is most appropriate during the autumn or winter months (March to August).

### BACKGROUND

The settlers who farm the fertile ground around the upper Hawkesbury River are well used to its capricious tendency for wild floods every few years. Depending on the year, settlers may have already lived through several major floods (the river flooded to catastrophic effect in March, 1799 then March, 1806 and again in May, 1809). The sturdy folks who till the land here simply sigh and



get on with rebuilding after the waters subside. Recently, however, there was a major flood of the Hawkesbury that left behind a curious legacy which made it difficult for the local farmers to simply get on with their business. In the days and weeks which came after the subsidence of the flood waters large numbers of locals began to report hearing weird sounds, hollow knocking noises which seemed to be coming from beneath the ground. What began as occasional strangeness which could be ignored has developed over time; now the peculiar sounds are heard almost daily, and have been reported in at least two different locations. Local graziers are at a loss to explain the phenomenon and are concerned that it seems to be affecting their livestock, interrupting supplies of milk and eggs. Clearly someone needs to find a way to stop the hollow echoes coming from beneath the fields.

## INVESTIGATIONS

- It is easy to track down local farmers who have heard the weird booming sounds; the noises they describe are remarkably consistent and appear to come from two main regions, both close to the banks of the Hawkesbury.
- No amount of searching through written records (or people's memories) can find any suggestion that such a phenomenon has been reported in this area previously, not even after previous floods.
- Inspecting the fields where farmers have heard the noises reveals nothing special, but inspecting the river close to these places reveals hints of unusual "holes" in the river bank. These prove to be the mouths of subterranean caves.

## THE TRUTH

Three options are presented as possible explanations behind the strange subterranean sounds:

1. *Temple of Dagon:* If using this option the problems in the Hawkesbury stem from a group of Deep Ones that were washed into the hinterland by the recent severe flooding. Separated from their sea-bound kin, the community of monstrosities took refuge in the pair of caves which can be accessed from the banks. While initially content to simply explore these underground networks of caverns, the disgusting

creatures eventually decided that one would be a perfect location to construct a foul temple in reverence of Dagon. Under cover of darkness they have made this unholy place beneath the ground, and here they carry out their noxious ceremonies – the sounds from which are one cause of the strange noises heard by the farmers. But much more significant sources of weird sounds are the dozens of unspeakable underwater horrors that the Deep Ones have summoned to Earth in their dark rituals. These frightening monstrosities live in each of the two cave systems joining the Hawkesbury. It is the plan of the Deep Ones to use this small army to set forth one night and slay every human they can find.

2. *Return of the Snake:* If using this option the phenomenon experienced by the Hawkesbury farmers is a consequence of the recent awakening of a group of Arkaroo (an Australian branch of the Serpent Man race, see *Secrets of Australia* for details), triggered as a result of the flood. The Arkaroo placed themselves into a voluntary hibernation many thousands of years ago when Australia was a very different place, a cold land less hospitable to their biology. Their subterranean hibernation chambers still litter the Australian landscape. This particular pod slept in a pair of caves some distance from the Hawkesbury but with passages that connect to the river. While the waterway has flooded hundreds of times over their period of slumber, the waters have never reached their sleeping chambers because tree roots have always heavily blocked the connecting paths. However the clearing of the land that European farmers have undertaken over the last decade have caused many of these roots to shrivel and die. This allowed the recent floodwaters to reach the sleeping serpents and wake them from their long slumber. Now that they have risen they are making use of the tools and magical items that they left buried with them in an effort to rebuild Serpent Man civilisation and ultimately retake control of the surface world. It is the sounds from these industrious preparations that farmers can hear beneath their fields. Unless something can be done to dissuade the Arkaroo from their purpose, a mighty battle is likely in the near future ... and while there are far more farmers than Serpent Men, the latter have some impressive weapons and technology at their disposal.



3. *The Resurrection Man*: If using this option the weirdness around the Hawkesbury River is the result of the occult experiments of one of the local farmers. Uriah Waterford is a man with a secret passion – in his spare time he likes to dabble with certain arcane rituals he learned in the 1760s when he studied with a group of sorcerers in the New England colonies of America. Those august men had the lofty goal of achieving immortality through the use of Mythos spells to resurrect the dead from “essential saltes”. As Waterford enters into old age his interests in such matters has been rekindled and he has begun a series of experiments to develop his techniques. Lacking the resources to build a proper magickal laboratory he has been making use of a pair of caves that he discovered on his meanderings up and down the Hawkesbury. Inside these makeshift workshops Waterford has been experimenting with as many dead bodies as he could obtain without raising attention from locals. Fortunately (for him) he has been involved in a number of “retaliatory strikes” against the local Aboriginals and has been able to carefully sneak back to the massacre sites and steal the bodies of the dead before their own clans could claim them.

At the time of the flood, Waterford had produced some forty “essential saltes” from the rendering of Aboriginal corpses, each kept within a jar in one of his two workshops close to where the caves joined the river. The recent flooding placed Waterford in somewhat of a quandary – as the waters continued to rise, it looked likely his entire experiment would be destroyed. Then he hit upon the plan of hastily reconstituting one or two of his victims and ordering them to move the jars deeper into the cave complex, somewhere safe from the floodwaters. The quick-fire ritual did not work as expected: instead of bringing a few servants to life he accidentally returned life all of the dead Aboriginals – in both workshops. While this error did allow the experimental subjects to all survive the flood by moving to dry sections of the cavern, Waterford was left with two clutches of grotesquely-deformed resurrected corpses angrily crashing around in the caves. Realising that each of them wanted to slay him for his cruel experimentation, the amateur sorcerer has taken the ignoble way out and fled

the Hawkesbury region altogether. Meanwhile his experiments continue to violently yet mindlessly scour the caves searching for a way out, and it is this subterranean activity that the farmers can hear beneath their fields.

## Seed 5: The Hinterland Monster

This seed takes the investigators into the wild country to the west of the settled parts of New South Wales; it can be run any time during the period covered by this sourcebook.

### BACKGROUND

West of Sydney, the hills rise wild. The lofty Blue Mountains form a natural barrier which keeps men from exploring further into the continent, and more importantly limits the extent to which the colony’s farms can extend. Right from the early days of settlement excursions have been made into this country in search of a pass through the mountains, but all to date have been turned back by one geographical obstacle or another. Most of the explorations have been done at the behest of the Governor of the day: for example, in 1802 Francis Barralier led two expeditions into the foothills for the Governor and between 1804 and 1807 botanist George Caley was regularly asked to sojourn there to collect plant specimens. Despite the efforts of these men and others, the hill country of the New South Wales hinterland remains largely an unexplored mystery. This is something the current Governor wishes to remediate, and he has chosen the investigators as principals in a new exploratory expedition to map out the mountains beyond Richmond Hill in the upper Hawkesbury. Unknown to anyone, this country is a region that even the local Aboriginals shun. It is home to some very peculiar (and not entirely natural) creatures – shadows that lurk in the densely forested foothills. Soon party members begin to vanish as if swallowed up by the ground, strange creatures are glimpsed but never seen, hours then days are lost as the party begins to stumble into wilder and wilder country. Fairly soon the men of the expedition are convinced that there is something unseen that is hunting them ... and they are not wrong.



## GETTING THE INVESTIGATORS INVOLVED

It's likely that the expedition will be made up of Government civil servants, some of whom may enjoy amateur status as scientists. One may be a surveyor. A handful of NSW Corps soldiers will accompany them as will a local Aboriginal guide or two. Any of these roles could conceivably be filled by an investigator. Alternatively any individual who has some knowledge of the country around Richmond Hill might get brought along to help direct the group.

## THE TRUTH

Three options are presented as possible explanation behind the horrors that lurk in the hinterland:

1. *Realm of the Yowie*: if using this option, the region into which the investigators have wandered is the stalking ground of the unique Australian cryptid known as the Yowie (a kind of "hairy man" similar to the Sasquatch or Bigfoot – see *Secrets of Australia* for more). Although not particularly intelligent, the Yowie are expert hunters, good at hiding, and very quick. Together these skills make them a frightening adversary in this densely-forested country. The reason that the Yowies stay close to this small region of the hinterland is because they are somehow mystically tied to a special cluster of pine trees, which are of a unique species extinct everywhere else in the world. The Yowies worship these trees and will do anything to keep people from defiling their sacred grove.
2. *Worms from Below*: if using this option, the investigator group has stumbled into a region where a nest of Chthonian eggs has been left. Many of the weird visions and sensations experienced by the expedition are inadvertent side-effects of the telepathic emanations from the several Chthonians which still lurk beneath the nearby hills. Once the investigators find the nest of eggs the adult creatures will sense their presence, and judge them to be a threat to their offspring. The Chthonians will stop at nothing to defend the eggs, first using their potent telepathic abilities to turn members of the party against one another, and then intervening more directly if necessary. If the investigators do not quickly



depart the area they may soon find that the very mountains themselves begin to bend and shift as the Mythos horrors carve a path to them.

3. *A Crack in Time*: if using this option, the strange effects that the expedition is experiencing are magical in nature and stem from the fact that the region is close to a giant time gate which is slowly breaking down. While there is no way to learn who made this arcane yet invisible device or for what purpose, one thing is certain: in its current state it presents a danger to the investigators. From time to time the failing gate spews forth hideous antediluvian creatures (see the Megafauna bestiary in the *Secrets of Australia* Companion PDF for some possible ideas). In the event that some or all of the expedition wanders into the gate itself they will likely vanish forever, transported back to some point in the distant past (or distant future?).

## Seed 6: Dream Sequence

This seed can be run at any time during the period covered by this sourcebook. The majority of the action takes place in a settled region (e.g., Sydney, Parramatta or Hobart Town) but it could also easily be adapted for a variety of more outlying locations.

## BACKGROUND

The investigators – like many people in the colony – have recently not been sleeping well at all. For the past few nights, each of them have experienced violent and strange nightmares, the details of which are hard to remember. Some mornings, the investigators have woken to find themselves covered in bruises and small cuts, presumably suffered from tossing and turning while asleep. At times the dreams are so harrowing that a Sanity loss of 0/1D3 might be called for.



## THE TRUTH

Three explanations are presented for these strange nocturnal horrors. The Keeper should use whichever option fits best with his or her own campaign:

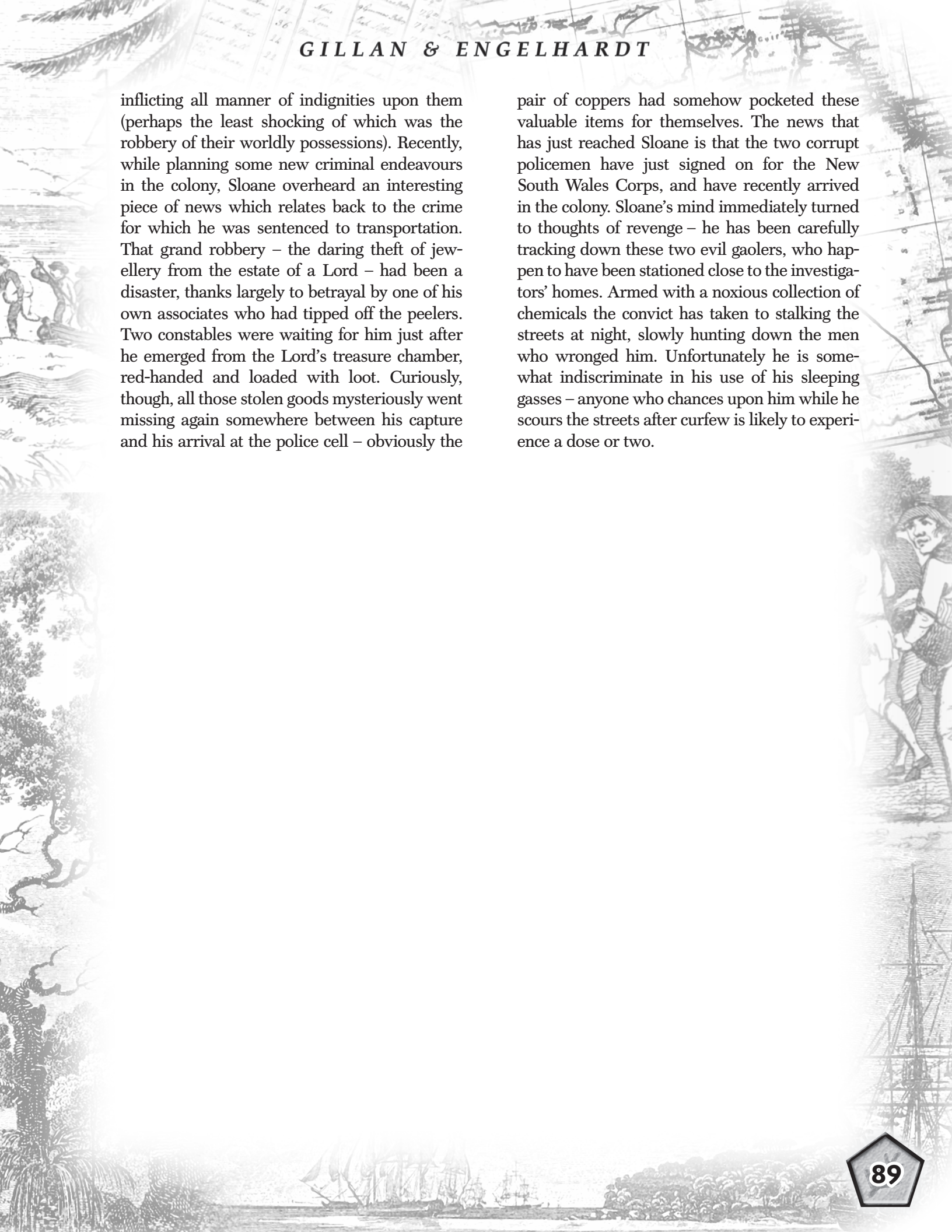
1. *The Haunted Dreamer*: if using this option, the investigators are not alone in experiencing the terrible dreams. Although most people are reluctant to discuss their night terrors, virtually everyone in the colony has experienced them at some time in the past weeks. Nobody is aware of it, but the colony of New South Wales is being hunted by something strange lurking in Alcheringa, the Aboriginal Dreaming. Each night the dreams dealt by this powerful entity get more and more vivid – it will not be too long before settlers and convicts with weak hearts start dying in their sleep. To learn more about this invisible adversary the investigators will need to track down an indigenous clan willing to share their knowledge of Alcheringa and willing to listen to the tales of Europeans succumbing to terrible dreams. Once the investigators have convinced an indigenous group to help they will learn that the cause of the problems is something called a “Dream Shambler” which has latched itself onto the settlement (if necessary, statistics for a Dimensional Shambler as found in the *Call of Cthulhu*, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition rules can be used). Something has woken this horrible entity; It will not desist from haunting the dreams of all who sleep nearby until it has either been killed or the original disturbance which created it has been found and removed. If they wish to, the investigators may travel to Alcheringa to battle with the Dream Shambler in its home dimension; otherwise they will need to learn what drew the horror to New South Wales.

In reality the cause of the Shambler’s ire is a curse that sits heavily upon the shoulders of a convict named Edward Sloane. Sloane recently arrived in the colony, serving a sentence for thievery. But prior to this conviction the authorities had strongly suspected Sloane of being responsible for the murder of several people, crimes committed while the victims slept. In each case, the deaths took place while the victim was in a locked room, each having been found the next morning literally torn to pieces. Although Sloane was nearby in all cases, there was no evidence to

convict him of the murders. In fact Sloane is not a murderer at all, but a very talented (or cursed) dreamer, whose nightly visitations into the realms of Dream attract horrors like the Dream Shambler back into our world. These were the creatures responsible for the deaths back in England; now Sloane’s arrival has brought the problem to the entire colony. Killing the cursed dreamer will banish the night-time horrors, but at the cost of slaying an innocent man.

2. *Chances of Anything Coming From Mars*: if using this option, the weird dreams experienced by the investigators are symptoms of them being drawn into weird echoes of the time war that took place on the Field of Mars many aeons ago. The visions they are receiving as dreams are actually emanations created by Yithian consciousnesses aimed at drawing them to the site of the ancient battle. Every night the investigators’ dreams will become more vivid, as they begin to more clearly experience scenes from the war that raged between the Great Race and the Tindalosians. The visions will continue to get worse until the investigators travel to the Field of Mars; if they consciously stay clear of this location they will begin to suffer dangerous consequences. One night a Hound of Tindalos will arrive at the residence of one of the investigators, apparently seeking them out as though marked in some way. Once the investigators have reached the battle site, they experience an even more vivid and detailed dream which directs them to dig up a strange alien device. This is an artefact of Yithian origins – a weapon that can destroy time-travelling entities like Tindalosians. This apparently is the destiny for which the Yithians have marked them.
3. *The Convict Chemist*: if using this option, the source of the peculiar dreams is nothing supernatural at all. Rather they are the work of a very deranged and dangerous man, a convict named Edward Sloane. This dark-hearted man recently arrived in the colony, convicted on charges of petty thievery. What nobody knows is that these minor deeds are but the footnote to a lurid and horrific catalogue of crimes, all aided by his extensive knowledge of industrial chemistry. Back in England, Sloane developed his own custom cocktails of chemical gasses with which he would paralyse victims before





inflicting all manner of indignities upon them (perhaps the least shocking of which was the robbery of their worldly possessions). Recently, while planning some new criminal endeavours in the colony, Sloane overheard an interesting piece of news which relates back to the crime for which he was sentenced to transportation. That grand robbery – the daring theft of jewellery from the estate of a Lord – had been a disaster, thanks largely to betrayal by one of his own associates who had tipped off the peelers. Two constables were waiting for him just after he emerged from the Lord's treasure chamber, red-handed and loaded with loot. Curiously, though, all those stolen goods mysteriously went missing again somewhere between his capture and his arrival at the police cell – obviously the

pair of coppers had somehow pocketed these valuable items for themselves. The news that has just reached Sloane is that the two corrupt policemen have just signed on for the New South Wales Corps, and have recently arrived in the colony. Sloane's mind immediately turned to thoughts of revenge – he has been carefully tracking down these two evil gaolers, who happen to have been stationed close to the investigators' homes. Armed with a noxious collection of chemicals the convict has taken to stalking the streets at night, slowly hunting down the men who wronged him. Unfortunately he is somewhat indiscriminate in his use of his sleeping gasses – anyone who chances upon him while he scours the streets after curfew is likely to experience a dose or two.



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# THE Sydney Gazette, AND NEW SOUTH WALES ADVERTISER :

Vol. V.]

Published by Authority.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 1807.

[ Number 205

It is hereby ordered, that all Proclamations, &c. which appear under the head of General Orders, and all Advertisements and Notices of any Officer of Government properly authorised to publish them in the SYDNEY GAZETTE, and NEW SOUTH WALES ADVERTISER, are meant and must be deemed to convey full and sufficient Notifications in the same manner as if they were particularly specified to any one Individual or others to whom such may have a Reference.

Sydney, August 13, 1806.

By command of His Excellency WILLIAM BLIGH, Esquire, Governor and Commander in Chief,  
EDMUND GRIFFIN, Secretary.

## General Orders.

**H**IS EXCELLENCY the GOVERNOR taking into his consideration the Evils which will arise from the Distillation of Spirits of any Description does hereby confirm the General Order of the 28th February, 1799, which is as follows.

"The Governor having received information from various quarters, that in direct disobedience of Public Orders, and in defiance of the consequences of detection, several persons in different parts of this Colony have taken the liberty of erecting Stills, and providing Materials for the purpose of distilling Spirituous Liquors. And as it is well known to the whole colony that this destructive practice has long been forbidden in this Settlement, and who has commanded in every Officer necessary to say more on the subject than to call on the aid and exertion of the whole body of Officers, whether Civil, Military or Naval, in suppressing it; and to desire, that wherever they may understand it continues to be carried on, or attempted, they may use every means in their power to detect the guilty person, and to seize or destroy the Utensils they may have provided for a purpose so certainly calculated to ruin the present healthy state of the Inhabitants of this Territory. All Constables, Watchmen, and other persons are hereby strictly enjoined, wherever they may have cause to suspect this forbidden trade is carried on, to make the same known to any Magistrate or Officer, in order that steps be regularly pursued for bringing any opposition to these Orders to proof. If those persons who shall presume to carry on this noxious work after every indulgence they may have hitherto received from the Government shall be immediately withdrawn, and they shall be ordered to quit the Colony by the earliest opportunity:—If a Convict, they will receive such treatment for their disobedience as their conduct in the opinion of a Court may appear to merit."

By Command of His Excellency,  
E. GRIFFIN, secretary.  
Government House, Sydney  
Feb. 14, 1807.

**H**IS EXCELLENCY the GOVERNOR laments at finding, by his late Visits through the Colony, that the most calamitous evils have been produced by Persons bartering or paying of Spirits for Grain of all kinds, the Necessities of Life, and Labourers for their Hire; such proceedings depressing the Industrious, and depriving the Settlers of their comforts and Services. In order to remedy these grievances who have suffered by this traffic he feels it his duty to put a total stop to this barter in future, and to prohibit the exchange of Spirits or other liquors as payment for Grain, Animal Food, Labour, Wearing Apparel, or any other commodity whatever, to all descriptions of Persons in the Colony and its Dependencies.

If a prisoner is convicted before a Bench of Magistrates of any of the offences above sta-

ted, he shall receive a punishment of 100 lashes, and be sentenced to Hard Labour for 12 Months:—If a Settler free by Servitude, Par- don, or Emancipation, he is to be deprived of all indulgences from the Crown; sen- tenced to Three Months Imprisonment, and pay a Fine of 20s to the King:—If a settler who came free into the Colony, and all other free Inhabitants, Masters, or any other descrip- tions of persons on board of Ships or Vessels, they are to lose all Indulgences granted them by the Crown, and pay a Fine of 50s to the King; all which fines on conviction shall be levied by the Provost Marshal, one Moiety to be given to the informer, and the other to be at the Disposal of the Governor.

His Excellency has the strongest confidence from the known distress of the Colony in con- sequence of this pernicious barter, that all Officers Civil and Military will be aiding and assisting in carrying this Order into full exe- cution, which ultimately must tend to relieve the distresses of the people, and to give credit and stability to the Settlement at large.

By Command of His Excellency,  
E. GRIFFIN, secretary.  
Govt. House, Sydney, Feb. 14, 1807.

**T**HE increase of Dogs in these Settlements having long been a great Nuisance, being at all times injurious to Stock, extremely dan- gerous to Children, and no less to persons on horseback, the GOVERNOR finds it expedient to recommend in the most decisive manner, that all Curs and other useless Dogs of every de- scription be destroyed; a measure which he doubts not will be very generally adopted, and the more especially by the Families of the Poor, whose sustenance must be much diminished in order to feed them, or the wretched animals left to prowl about for food to the great annoy- ance of the Public.

By Command of His Excellency,  
E. GRIFFIN, Sec.  
Government House, Sydney  
Feb. 14, 1807.

**W**anted Seven or Eight Able Seamen to serve on board His Majesty's Colonial Vessel Estamina. — Applications to be made on board to the Commander, without delay.

Secretary's Office Feb. 14, 1807.

**T**he undermentioned person has obtained His Excellency's permission to depart the Colony, viz.

In the Elizabeth. — William Juris

All claims or demands on the above named person are to be forthwith presented in Wri- ting at this Office.

By Command of His Excellency,  
E. GRIFFIN, Sec.

**N**OTICE:—Whereas a number of persons having presumptuously insisted on there being a Public Road through my back Farm at Richmond, and having trespassed thereon as well as their Stock, I do hereby caution all persons from going through the said Farm and from suffering their Stock to trespass thereon as after this public notice they will be dealt with to the utmost rigour of the Law.

Thomas M. Pitt.

**L**OST, on the South Head Road, the Top Piece of a Spy Glass. Whoever will re- store the same to the owner, J. Underwood, will receive an ample Reward.

**N**OTICE.— Little or no attention having been paid to the Advertisement of the 1st ultimo the undersigned is under the necessity (he being about to quit the Colony) of giving this public Notice, that coercive measures will be adopted for the recovery of all Debts that shall remain unpaid after the said instant.

J. SPARROW.

## SYDNEY.

Sitting Magistrate for the ensuing Week —  
the JUDGE ADVOCATE

Yesterday arrived the Contest, out nearly four months, designing to visit the sealing grounds at Dusky Bay; but obliged from threat of weather to make for Norfolk Island from whence she brings accounts confirming the unfavourable representation heretofore made of the crops there.

Yesterday arrived also, the Marcia, from the islands in the Straits, with skins and oil, a full vessel, but being unable to make the Heads, put into Botany Bay. She brings two persons belonging to Port Dalrymple, who state that themselves with three others were sent in a boat from that settlement with dispatches for HIS EXCELLENCY which were to be de- livered to the sealers at Cape Barren, to be brought up by the first conveyance; but that between Swan Island and the Main their boat was upset by a heavy sea, when 2 of their com- panions unfortunately perished: The others were picked up by a party upon Swan Island who witnessed the distressing spectacle. The names of the unfortunate men were Whitaker and McAvoy, the former a private in the Corps.

From an Asiatic paper we copy the follow- ing articles of intelligence — on or about the 16th of last May, intelligence was received at Leghorn, of a severe and well fought action having taken place in the vicinity of Naples between the French army commanded by General Massena and a body of British troops in which the French were defeated with great slaughter, having left 4000 men killed on the field of battle.

The King of Naples had left Palermo in a British Man of War, and had arrived in Eng- land, where it would appear he meant to reside.

The King of Prussia was in France, and from there in which this information was given at Leghorn, it might be concluded that domestic treaty or disaffection of the army has caused His Prussian Majesty to seek refuge at the Court of the French imperial household.

Captain Thompson was boarded by an Eng- lish sloop of war off the Cape de Vera Islands yesterday and was informed by an Eng- lish sloop of war off the Cape de Vera Islands that Jerome Bonaparte's squadron of East Indianen val of a British squadron which was in pursuit of him.



# PART VI: Resources



## A Short Bibliography

In writing *Convicts & Cthulhu* the authors consulted a great number of books, articles, and websites on Colonial Australia and did not even scratch the surface of what is available. For the purposes of accessible further reading on the era for gaming purposes, the following are recommended to Keepers and players.

## TV and Film

The recent BBC TV series *Banished* (2015), while set slightly earlier than the period covered by this sourcebook, remains a rich resource in particular for some of the hardships and personal challenges faced by convicts.

The recent two-part Australian Broadcasting Corporation TV mini-series *The Secret River* (2015) is an adaptation of the novel by Kate Grenville (see below) and concerns convict farmers on the

Hawkesbury River in 1806 and their relationship to the local Aboriginal people.

## Convict Fiction

There is a lot of modern fiction with a convict setting. Below is a short selection of some useful ones, especially some available in the public domain as a free download.

Those annotated with an asterisk (\*) are specifically set in the time period of the sourcebook.

- Marcus Clarke, *For the Term of His Natural Life*, 1871. The most famous convict novel and an Australian classic. (A free ebook is available at: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/3424/3424-h/3424-h.htm>).
- Richard Cobbold\*, *The History of Margaret Catchpole: A Suffolk Girl*, 1845. Margaret Catchpole was a real-life convict and survivor of the Hawkesbury floods. This is a fictionalised account of her life. (A free ebook can be downloaded at: <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/39326>)



- Bryce Courtney, *The Potato Factory*, 1995. Set in Van Diemen's Land.
- Eleanor Dark\*, *The Timeless Land Trilogy* (*The Timeless Land*, 1951, *Storm of Time*, 1948\*, *No Barrier*, 1953). The second volume of this trilogy is set during Bligh's time as Governor.
- Kate Grenville\*, *The Secret River*, 2005. Set in the Hawkesbury River area and deals with complex relations between Aboriginal people and white settlers.
- Henry Savery\*, *Quintus Servinton*, 1830. Savery is Australia's first novelist and largely forgotten today. He was a convict transported to Van Diemen's Land. (An online version of his novel with biography of Savery can be found at: <http://setis.library.usyd.edu.au/ozlit/pdf/p00101.pdf>)
- James Tucker, *Ralph Rashleigh*, 1840. Tucker was a convict who wrote from his own experience. Although set later than the period here it is worth reading. (A free ebook version is downloadable at <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks03/0301291.txt>).

## Historical Books

- C M H Clarke, *A History of Australia, Volume One: From the Earliest Times to the Age of Macquarie*, 1962. Clarke's multi-volume opus is considered one of the high points of history writing in Australia and volume one covers the period of the *Convicts & Cthulhu* setting, including a section devoted to Van Diemen's Land.
- Jan Kociumbas, *The Oxford History of Australia Volume 2: 1770-1860 Possessions*, 1990. Revisionist history writing and excellent overview of Australia's early convict years.
- Mark Hearn and Ross Fitzgerald, *Bligh, Macarthur and the Rum Rebellion*, Kangaroo Press, 1988. A standard modern work and probably the most accessible overview, but hard to find.
- H.V. Evatt, *The Rum Rebellion*, Angus and Robertson, 1938. The classic history.
- Robert Hughes, *The Fatal Shore*, Vintage Books, 1988. An exhaustive history of convict life. Lots of lurid details.
- J.B. Hirst, *Convict Society and Its Enemies*, Allen & Unwin, 1983. A useful look at the factions of convict-era Sydney.

## Online Books

There are also excellent free sources that can be downloaded from sites such as Australian Gutenberg. Some are contemporary to the period, while others are written later. Their historicity is a little dated by today's standard but they still provide a rich resource and some interesting details.

- *Convict Life* (published 1889). An early history. Periods are covered in brief but some of the details of convict life are useful. <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks12/1204081h.html>
- *Mutiny; and the Trial of Lt. Col. Johnston* by Watson, et al. An early account of the Rebellion with some interesting detail. <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks13/1300731h.html>.
- *The History of New South Wales, from Its First Discovery to the Present Time* (published 1811). An early account of life in the colony including a full transcript of the post-Rebellion trial of George Johnston, the notional leader of the uprising. Also includes a description of Van Diemen's Land and Norfolk Island. <https://archive.org/details/historynewsouth00pategoog>
- *Bligh's Sydney Rebellion*. The State Library of New South Wales had an exhibition about the Rebellion in 2008. The site is no longer current, but the colourful and very useful handbook is downloadable in PDF at: [http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/events/exhibitions/2008/politicpower/docs/bligh\\_guide.pdf](http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/events/exhibitions/2008/politicpower/docs/bligh_guide.pdf)

## Websites

- *The Rum Track* – an excellent site about different locations important to the Rebellion. <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/Heritage/research/rumtrack.htm>
- The *Australian Dictionary of Biography* has detailed entries on all of the main figures in this adventure and more. The main site is at: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/>
- The *Dictionary of Sydney*. The Dictionary of Sydney is a great collection of information about historical Sydney including pictures. However it is good to know what you are looking for, so The Rum Track is probably the best place to start. <http://www.dictionaryofsydney.org/>
- *Barani: Sydney's Aboriginal History*. Barani offers an excellent and accessible resource on Aboriginal Sydney. <http://www.sydneybarani.com.au/sites/aboriginal-people-and-place/>



# Representative Statistics

## Typical NSW Corps Officer, Self-promoting agent of His Majesty's Army

STR 60	CON 50	SIZ 65	DEX 55	INT 55
APP 50	POW 55	EDU 50	SAN 50	Hit Points: 11
Damage bonus: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 7 Magic Points: 11				
Brawl	25% (12/5), damage 1D3 + Damage Bonus			
Flintlock Pistol*	40% (20/8), damage 1D6+1 [Range 10 yard; 1 shot per 4 rounds; Malfunction 95+]			
Sword	55% (27/11), damage 1D8+1+Damage Bonus			
Dodge	45% (22/7)			

Armour: None

Skills: Credit Rating 60%, First Aid 30%, Ride 55%, Stealth 45%, Spot Hidden 50%.

[\* Officer is likely to carry a "brace" of pistols; i.e. a matched set of two]

## Typical NSW Corps Soldier, Poorly trained rabble a long way from home

STR 60	CON 50	SIZ 65	DEX 55	INT 40
APP 40	POW 45	EDU 35	SAN 50	Hit Points: 11
Damage bonus: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 7 Magic Points: 9				
Brawl	60% (30/12), damage 1D3 + Damage Bonus			
Musket	55% (27/11), damage 1D10+4 [Range 100 yard; 1 shot per 4 rounds; Malfunction 95+]			
Carbine*	55% (27/11), damage 1D10+4 [Range 70 yard; 1 shot per 4 rounds; Malfunction 95+]			
Bayonette	45% (22/9), damage 1D6+1+Damage Bonus			
Dodge	30% (15/6)			

Armour: None

Skills: Credit Rating 45%, Listen 30%, Ride 45%, Spot Hidden 40%.

[\* Soldier is only likely to be armed with a Carbine if he is mounted, otherwise he will have a musket optionally fitted with a bayonette.]

## Typical Convict Overseer/Watchman/Constable, General "dogs body" charged with keeping peace among the convicts

STR 60	CON 40	SIZ 55	DEX 40	INT 50
APP 45	POW 50	EDU 35	SAN 55	Hit Points: 9
Damage bonus: none Build: 0 Move: 8 Magic Points: 10				

Brawl	60% (30/12), damage 1D3 + Damage Bonus
Bullwhip	75% (15/6), damage 1D3+half Damage Bonus [range 10 feet]

Dodge	35% (17/7)
-------	------------

Armour: None

Skills: Credit Rating 25%, Spot Hidden 50%, Stealth 35%.

## Typical Convict, refuse of the British Empire

STR 75	CON 35	SIZ 75	DEX 60	INT 55
APP 35	POW 60	EDU 25	SAN 50	Hit Points: 11
Damage bonus: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 8 Magic Points: 12				

Brawl	70% (35/14), damage 1D3 + Damage Bonus
Dodge	65% (32/13)

Armour: None

Skills: Credit Rating 5%, Listen 40%, Sleight of Hand 60%, Stealth 55%, Spot Hidden 45%.

## Typical Free Settler / Farmer, hopeful emigrants seeking to make a new life in a new world

STR 65	CON 50	SIZ 70	DEX 65	INT 60
APP 60	POW 55	EDU 50	SAN 55	Hit Points: 12
Damage bonus: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 7 Magic Points: 11				

Brawl	45% (22/7), damage 1D3 + Damage Bonus
Fowling Piece	40% (20/8), damage 4D6/2D6/1D6 [2 barrels; Range 10/20/50 yards; 3 rounds to reload each barrel; Malfunction 95+]

Dodge	45% (22/7)
-------	------------

Armour: None

Skills: Credit Rating 55%, Craft (various) 45%, Mechanical Repair 45%, Ride 50%, Track 35%.



## CONVICTS & CTHULHU

### Typical Aboriginal Man, member of a rapidly dwindling population of Indigenous Australians

STR 70 CON 75 SIZ 65 DEX 75 INT 65  
APP 50 POW 55 EDU 45\* SAN 60 Hit Points: 14  
Damage bonus: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 9 Magic Points: 11

Brawl 55% (27/11), damage 1D3 + Damage Bonus

Thrown Spear 65% (32/13), damage 1D8+1+half Damage Bonus [Range 70 yards; takes 1 round to ready a spear before throwing]

War Boomerang 45% (22/9), damage 1D8+half Damage Bonus [Range 210 yards; does not return to thrower]

Dodge 70% (35/14)

Armour: None

Skills: Climb 40%, Listen 45%, Natural World 60%, Spot Hidden 40%, Stealth 70%, Survival 50%.

[\* EDU for Aboriginal characters reflects training in traditional law; in terms of European learning all Aboriginal characters have an effective EDU 0]

### Typical Surgeon, ex-ship's doctor, now serving the Government of NSW

STR 60 CON 50 SIZ 65 DEX 75 INT 75  
APP 70 POW 65 EDU 80 SAN 65 Hit Points: 11  
Damage bonus: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 9 Magic Points: 13

Brawl 25% (12/5), damage 1D3 + Damage Bonus

Flintlock Pistol\* 40% (20/8), damage 1D6+1 [Range 10 yards; 1 shot per 4 rounds; Malfunction 95+]

Sword 55% (27/11), damage 1D8+1+Damage Bonus

Dodge 45% (22/7)

Armour: None

Skills: Credit Rating 65%, First Aid 70%, Medicine 70%, Persuade 40%, Psychology 50%, Ride 45%, Science (Chemistry, Biology) 60%, Spot Hidden 50%.

[\* likely to carry a "brace" of pistols; i.e. a matched set of two]

### Typical Government Officer, expert in their field and on the Governor's business

STR 60 CON 50 SIZ 55 DEX 60 INT 65  
APP 50 POW 50 EDU 70 SAN 50 Hit Points: 11  
Damage bonus: none Build: 0 Move: 9 Magic Points: 11

Brawl 50% (25/10), damage 1D3 + Damage Bonus

Dodge 45% (22/7)

Armour: None

Skills: Accounting 50%, Credit Rating 65%, First Aid 40%, Persuade 60%, Ride 40%, (Personal Specialty) 80%, Spot Hidden 50%.

### Typical Merchant, wants to see the Colony grow from a prison to a great new market

STR 60 CON 70 SIZ 60 DEX 65 INT 70  
APP 60 POW 60 EDU 70 SAN 60 Hit Points: 13  
Damage bonus: none Build: 0 Move: 9 Magic Points: 12

Brawl 45% (22/7), damage 1D3 + Damage Bonus

Fowling Piece 40% (20/8), damage 4D6/2D6/1D6 [2 barrels; Range 10/20/50 yards; 3 rounds to reload each barrel; Malfunction 95+]

Dodge 45% (22/7)

Armour: None

Skills: Accounting 60%, Appraise 70%, Credit Rating 85%, Craft (various) 45%, Law 50%, Persuade 75%.

Note: If a merchant is a member of the Sydney or Parramatta militia, add 10% to Firearms.





# Convict Era Investigator

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Player \_\_\_\_\_  
 Occupation \_\_\_\_\_  
 Age \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_  
 Residence \_\_\_\_\_  
 Birthplace \_\_\_\_\_

# CHARACTERISTICS

STR   DEX   INT    
 CON   APP   POW    
 SIZ   EDU   Move   
 Know   Rate

Major Wound	Max HP		
Dying	00	01	02
Unconscious	03	04	05
06	07	08	09
10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17
18	19	20	

Temp. Insane	Indef. Insane	Start	Max	Insane	01	02	03	04	05	06	07
08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42
43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	
54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65
66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	
77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88
89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	

# Convicts & CTHULHU

Max MP				
00	01	02	03	04
05	06	07	08	09
10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24

Out of Luck	01	02	03	04	05	06	07
08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38
39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46
47	48	49	50	51	52	53	
54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61
62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69
70	71	72	73	74	75	76	
77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84
85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92
93	94	95	96	97	98	99	

# SKILLS

<input type="checkbox"/> Accounting (05%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Fast Talk (05%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Language (Own) (0r%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Ride (05%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Alcheringa Dream Lore	<input type="checkbox"/> Fighting (Brawl) (25%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Law (05%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Science (0r%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Animal Handling (05%)	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Library Use (05%)	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Appraise (05%)	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Listen (20%)	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art / Craft (05%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Firearms (Flintlock) (20%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Locksmith (0r%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Sleight of Hand (10%)
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Firearms (Musket) (25%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Lore (Aboriginal) (0r%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Spot Hidden (25%)
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Mech. Repair (10%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Stealth (20%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Charm/Bootlick (15%)	<input type="checkbox"/> First Aid (30%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Medicine (0r%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Survival (10%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Climb (20%)	<input type="checkbox"/> History (05%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Natural World (10%)	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
Credit Rating (00%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Intimidate (15%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Navigate (10%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Swim (20%)
Cthulhu Mythos (00%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Insight (05%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Occult (05%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Throw (20%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Disguise (05%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Jump (20%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Op. Hv. Machine (0r%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Track (10%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Dodge (half DEX)	<input type="checkbox"/> Language (Other) (0r%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Persuade (10%)	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Dream Song	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Pilot Ship (0r%)	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Drive Horse/Cart (20%)	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion (20%)	<input type="checkbox"/> _____

# WEAPONS

Weapon	Regular	Hard	Extreme	Damage	Range	Attacks	Ammo	Malf.
Unarmed				rd3 + db	-	I	-	-
_____								
_____								
_____								
_____								
_____								
_____								

# COMBAT

Damage Bonus	<input type="text"/>
Build	<input type="text"/>
Dodge	<input type="text"/>



# Backstory



Personal Description \_\_\_\_\_

Traits \_\_\_\_\_

Ideology/Beliefs \_\_\_\_\_

Injuries & Scars \_\_\_\_\_

Significant People \_\_\_\_\_

Phobias & Manias \_\_\_\_\_

Meaningful Locations \_\_\_\_\_

Arcane Tomes, Spells & Artifacts \_\_\_\_\_

Treasured Possessions \_\_\_\_\_

Encounters with Strange Entities \_\_\_\_\_

## Gear & Possessions

## Cash & Assets

Spending Level \_\_\_\_\_

Cash \_\_\_\_\_

Assets \_\_\_\_\_

## Quick Reference Rules

### Skill & Characteristic Rolls

Levels of Success: 

Fumble 100/96+	Fail > skill	Regular ≤ skill	Hard ½ skill	Extreme ⅓ skill	Critical 01
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Pushing Rolls: Must justify reroll; Cannot Push Combat or Sanity Rolls

### Wounds & Healing

First Aid heals 1HP; Medicine heals +1d3 HP

**Major Wound** = loss of  $\geq \frac{1}{2}$  max HP in one attack

Reach 0 HP without Major Wound = **Unconscious**

Reach 0 HP with Major Wound = **Dying**

**Dying**: First Aid = temp. stabilised; then require Medicine

**Natural Heal rate** (non Major Wound): recover 1HP per day

**Natural Heal rate** (Major Wound): weekly healing roll

## Fellow Investigators

Char.  
Player

Char.  
Player

Char.  
Player

Char.  
Player

**Me**

Char.  
Player

Char.  
Player

Char.  
Player

Char.  
Player



# Cosmic Horror fuelled by Human Cruelty & Depravity.

The prison colonies of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century Australia are justly feared throughout the **BRITISH EMPIRE** as places of unparalleled suffering and torment. The refuse of the Empire are sent here to serve out prison terms in a land half a world away from "civilisation". A world that, to European eyes, seems thoroughly alien.

But, few among the white-skinned invaders know just how many secrets lurk within this ancient land. For countless generations the indigenous men and women have lived in perfect balance with the timeless forces that haunt Australia; but now, just a decade or so after the arrival of the British colonists, their ability to hold those powers in check is about to fail. And while horrors long-resident are poised to awaken, dark-hearted white men have also brought their own horrors to Australia in the form of terrifying cosmic gods and disgusting occult creatures.

*Convicts & Cthulhu* is a sourcebook designed to allow *Call of Cthulhu* Keepers and players to run scenarios and campaigns set in the penal colonies of early Australia. It particularly targets the historical period from 1795 to 1810, a time in which law and order played second-fiddle to greed and corruption. This was the depraved era which led ultimately to Australia's first (and only) military uprising: the **RUM REBELLION!**

Contained within this book are historical notes on the era, character templates for investigators from all walks of life (indigenous, convicts, military, free settlers), weapons and equipment, and detailed gazetteers for **SYDNEY**, **PARRAMATTA** and other settlements. Also included are details of cults & Mythos entities in the colonies, a full introductory scenario and a plentiful assortment of scenario seeds.

## A CTHULHU REBORN PUBLICATION

This book is one in an expanding collection of high-quality publications for Chaosium's *Call of Cthulhu* roleplaying game. For a full list of titles available for download or purchase, visit: [cthulhureborn.com](http://cthulhureborn.com)

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